

Voice & Vision

A HISTORY OF
BROADCASTING IN
NEW ZEALAND



Patrick Day

VOLUME TWO

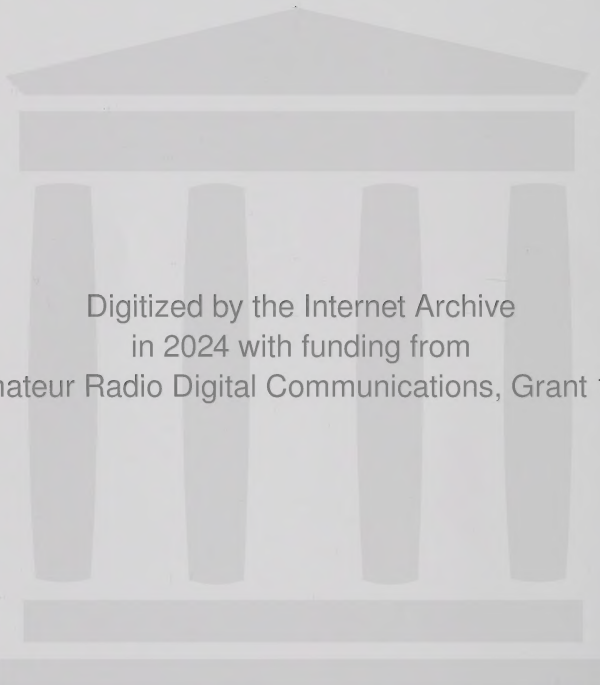
Voice & Vision follows *The Radio*

Years (1994) and is the second and concluding volume of Patrick Day's history of New Zealand broadcasting. Dealing with the years from 1950 to the present, it begins with the shift from state to public broadcasting, the birth of television and the spread of coverage nationwide, and follows the many changes in the structure of broadcasting, from the NZBC through to the 1990s focus on radio and television as essentially commercial activities. Public and private broadcasting in both media are given full coverage and Day shows how private radio and television gained new acceptance as they rose to dominance in the 1990s alongside the growing commercialisation of public broadcasting.

Broadcasting is a topic of great public interest and has played a significant role in forming our ideas of identity and nation. A world of colourful personalities and impassioned controversies, it has entertained, infuriated and informed listeners and viewers. Its administration has throughout this period been a subject of widespread debate, with perennial arguments about advertising, local content, and sports broadcasting; and a series of *causes célèbres*, like the sacking of Alex MacLeod, the heroics of Radio Hauraki, and the fortunes of John Hawkesby and Brian Edwards, have kept broadcasting in the forefront of public attention. Patrick Day offers a comprehensive history of a complex and fascinating aspect of contemporary life and leisure.

Voice & Vision was commissioned by the Broadcasting History Trust.

Voice and Vision



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A HISTORY OF BROADCASTING
IN NEW ZEALAND

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Patrick Day



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To my children, Adam, Ruby and Sophie

Now while the guilt is fresh
In our intimate theatre,
Listen and you will hear
The old, old gags recur:

Allen Curnow, *Not In Narrow Seas*

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAAA	Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation (also has an American existence)
ABJ	Association of Broadcasting Journalists
ABS	Aotearoa Broadcasting System
AJHR	<i>Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives</i>
AM	amplitude modulation
AMRB	Aotearoa Maori Radio Board
APRA	Australasian Performing Rights Association
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library
ATN	Alternative Television Network
AWA	Amalgamated Wireless (Australia) Limited
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCINA	British Commonwealth International News Service
BCL	Broadcast Communications Limited
BCNZ	Broadcasting Council of New Zealand, 1 April 1975–31 January 1977 Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand, 1 February 1977–30 November 1989
BNZ	Bank of New Zealand
BSA	Broadcasting Standards Authority
CAC	Communications Advisory Council
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
D	collection of Patrick Day
ERP	effective radiated power
FA	Football Association
FICB	Federation of Independent Commercial Broadcasters
FM	frequency modulation
ft	feet
G	collection of Dr R. J. Gregory, Department of Public Policy, Victoria University.
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNS	General News Service
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IBA	Independent Broadcasters Association Incorporated
IL	Infotind Library
INL	Independent Newspapers Limited
IPDG	Independent Producers' and Directors' Guild
IRD	Inland Revenue Department
ITA	Independent Television Authority
ITN	Independent Television News
ITV	Independent Television
M	Warren Mayne collection, Victoria University of Wellington.
m	million
MOW	Ministry of Works
MP	member of parliament

MTV	music television
NA	National Archives
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NFU	National Film Unit
NPA	Newspaper Proprietors' Association
NZBA	New Zealand Broadcasting Authority
NZBC	New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation
NZBS	New Zealand Broadcasting Service
NZEI	New Zealand Educational Institute
NZMA	New Zealand Magazines Archives
NZOA	New Zealand On Air, the re-titled Broadcasting Commission
NZPA	New Zealand Press Association
NZPD	<i>New Zealand Parliamentary Debates</i>
NZPGMF	New Zealand Post Graduate Medical Federation
NZPO	New Zealand Post Office
NZRFU	New Zealand Rugby Football Union
NZSO	New Zealand Symphony Orchestra
NZT	New Zealand time
OB	outside broadcast
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHC	Oral History Centre, Alexander Turnbull Library
PAL	Phase Alternative Line
P&T	Post and Telegraph
PPTA	Post Primary Teachers Association
PSA	New Zealand Public Service Association
PSC	Public Service Commission
QC	Queen's Counsel
RCA	Radio Corporation of America
RNZ	Radio New Zealand
RNZN	Royal New Zealand Navy
RNZSA	Radio New Zealand Sound Archives
SOE	State Owned Enterprise
SPADA	Screen Producers' and Directors' Association
SPTV	South Pacific Television
SSC	State Services Commission
TAB	Totalisator Agency Board
TVPDA	Television Producers' and Directors' Association
UGC	University Grants Committee
UHF	Ultra High Frequency
VHF	Very High Frequency
VOA	Voice of America
VUW	Victoria University of Wellington

PREFACE

This work, the sequel to *The Radio Years*, deals with the recent decades of New Zealand broadcasting. It begins in the 1950s with the growing political acceptance that television be allowed into the country and that broadcasting be released from the control of a government department. It ends in the 1990s, the decade which has witnessed New Zealand's largest broadcasting growth, both in the number of television and radio stations and in their hours of transmission. The intervening years saw television reach a position of unparalleled supremacy and influence and radio shrink then expand again as it accommodated to the new broadcasting environment and forged a new relationship with listeners. It is a story of change and development both of broadcasting and of New Zealand. In spite of the release from direct government control it is also a story of political determination as successive governments prescribed anew the mix of public and private broadcasting. This work is not so much a record of what has been broadcast in New Zealand as a study of the continuing conflict over who may broadcast and what broadcasting should be. This has many ingredients, from audience desires, to producers' interests and abilities, to the many expectations arising from years of experience of broadcasting. But central to this determination have been the unending negotiations between governments, broadcasting administrators and broadcasters themselves. These have at times focused on particular programmes, on their formats and on whether they should go to air at all. More usually they have concerned two more general areas: the control and the nature of broadcasting. There has been particular debate about the respective merits of public and private broadcasting. Private broadcasting was forcibly reintroduced to New Zealand in the 1960s and its acceptance has blossomed since then. This history records the swing of the pendulum as the earlier belief that broadcasting should be publicly owned and controlled has changed to an equal certainty that the normal status for broadcasting should be one of private control with success measured by radio and television stations' commercial prowess.

This volume completes a commission from the Broadcasting History Trust. In my first volume I thanked the trustees for their support and non-intervention, heartfelt from a sociologist happy to be left to write his history. Again I thank them. This time I have dealt with the recent years in which all the trustees have been involved. All prominent former broadcasting administrators, I thank them for being open in their discussions with me and remaining unperturbed about the uses I make of such information. Along with research funding, they have also assisted my access to considerable material. I am grateful to Maurice Williamson who, as minister of broadcasting, much assisted this work by allowing me full access to the broadcasting archives, many of which are under various restrictions. I acknowledge and thank Stephen Reilly and Jim Sullivan for their interviews in the RNZ Sound Archives 1985 early television history series and for their kindness. I thank Bob Gregory who has made available the taped interviews he did with various broadcasting figures for his 1979 doctorate, 'The Rise and Fall of the NZBC'. I thank the many people who have allowed me to interview them and have patiently assisted my understanding of the craft of broadcasting. I thank Les Andrews, Cleve Costello, Godfrey Gray and Bill McMillan, all of who have written marvellous though unpublished accounts of broadcasting matters, and all of whom have allowed me to read and benefit from their work. I thank Ken Arvidson, Bill and Karen Day, Peter Downes, Brian Easton, David Edmunds, John Martin, John Roberts, David Sherlock, Jeremy Smith, John M. Thomson, Pahmi Winter and Ruth Zanker. I am grateful to the staff of the National Archives, to Hugo Manson and Linda Evans of the Oral History Centre of the National Library, to the staff of the Infocind Library of New Zealand Public Radio and to the staff of Radio New Zealand's Sound Archives for their assistance. Again I give thanks for the hospitality afforded me at the Stout Research Centre at Victoria University of Wellington and for the kindness shown me by the residents and the directors, Allan Thomas and Vincent O'Sullivan. Again I thank my own university, the University of Waikato, for giving me study leave which has greatly assisted this research.

*Hamilton
November 1999*

INTRODUCTION

In 1950s New Zealand, broadcasting referred to the radio programmes from the government department that controlled all but two of the country's commercial and non-commercial stations. Broadcasting was society wide. Most homes had radio sets, as did many public places from hotel bars to offices. The wireless was into its second generation and for an increasing majority radio listening was an accepted part of life. Radio's breakfast sessions accompanied the daily preparations for school and work. Its music was hummed and sung. Its serials provided daytime entertainment for the home-based female population and evening entertainment for all. Birthday greetings were announced from its children's sessions, sports commentaries gave news of local and national events and church services marked Sundays and the festive and solemn occasions of the year.

Much of this was the case in many countries, but New Zealand parted company from most with its state control of broadcasting. This politically controlled system, with a minister much involved in day-to-day administration, gave New Zealand a cohesive national voice and a near universal coverage of a thinly populated country, but there were also disadvantages not found overseas. In serious discussion only voices favoured by the state were heard, news broadcasts were politically controlled rather than independent and there was a political refusal to allow broadcasting innovations, especially television, that were becoming commonplace elsewhere. The 1950s saw the rise of less formal styles of broadcasting, especially from the commercial stations, which sat incongruously with the political domination. Accompanying this were regular attempts to introduce a broadcasting news service, mounting disquiet over the political control of broadcasting and a growing recognition that New Zealand was becoming increasingly tardy in introducing television. At length National and Labour, the main political parties, both saw political advantage in allowing change and government department became public corporation, in 1961.

The acceptance of television and the change of status to an independent public corporation, the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC), was the most significant change to New Zealand broadcasting since it was incorporated into the government service in the 1930s. The

NZBC controlled all but two of the existing and any new radio stations and began television broadcasting. Four television stations were started, in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Because national networking was not possible, programmes were flown to the four stations and broadcast on separate nights. Although the four stations shared most of their programmes, a regional emphasis developed. Each station had its own announcing staff and local fare was highly regarded by the audience, especially the *Town and Around* programmes. The four stations had distinctive local identities until 1969 when national television networking became possible and single centralised programming gradually supplanted the earlier diversity.

Broadcasting news and current affairs programmes also began, the first substantial challenge to the country's newspapers since they formed a news co-operative in the 1880s. The practices of broadcasting journalism had to be learnt, as did the courage of independence. These developed more rapidly among the corporation's journalists than its senior administrators and in the 1960s the two groups vied to define the nature of broadcasting journalism. Successive governments had to accept the loss of their power to command news bulletins and current affairs programmes and there were many altercations during this process. Public broadcasting journalism, in the public interest as opposed to the interests of the state, matured during the decade.

The degree of independence exercised by the corporation was always a topic of contention. Debate focused on governments' attitudes and actions towards news and current affairs programmes, but the state's continuing financial domination of broadcasting was of at least equal importance. This was expressed in a directive forbidding borrowing and requiring that all development be financed from current revenue (a combination of income from advertising and the broadcasting licence fee paid by the public). Initially, all growth was timetabled according to the profits from commercial radio but by the mid-1960s television's growth rendered commercial radio unprofitable and television's advertising revenue determined further development throughout the entire broadcasting system. Government control was considerable: television, like radio, was to be developed as a single national voice.

New Zealand-made television programming covered a wide range from news and documentaries to light entertainment and sport. All areas needed to mature. So did the appreciation of the audience, quite unused to television. Good or bad, all local programming existed as a new part of collective life and it was received with enthusiasm. It followed the styles, from news broadcasts to soap operas to wildlife documentaries, developed in other television countries, though regularly with a distinctive New Zealand quality. The earlier desire to keep broadcasting employees anonymous began to fade in the 1950s with commercial radio announcers and was

quite destroyed by television. Announcers, actors, sports commentators and light entertainment comperes became national identities.

But the requirement to concentrate expenditure on extending television coverage meant a relative neglect of local programming, particularly drama, and an opting for imported programmes, mainly from the United States and Britain. This cost far less than making local productions. The NZBC became, on a world scale, an abnormally high scheduler of imported programmes. Local voices were a small minority in the country's broadcasting.

NZBC radio and television shared a common news service but otherwise grew separately. From the mid-1960s the YA and associated non-commercial stations were networked into the single National Programme, giving a new direction and cohesion. With this change the commercial stations, also known as the community stations, accentuated their local role. They continued to attract a considerably larger audience than their non-commercial counterparts but lost much of their influence as the evening audience deserted radio for television. The commercial stations did not respond well to the challenge from television and were vulnerable to private broadcasters willing to introduce new styles of radio broadcasting.

In the 1960s private commercial broadcasting was a new voice, concentrating in its programming on the new popular music of that decade. Although it was permitted in theory, in practice all applications by private stations were unsuccessful. Both government and corporation were unwilling to allow private broadcasters to disturb the corporation monopoly. Private broadcasting returned in 1965 with the entry of the pirate radio broadcaster, Radio Hauraki. Bolstered by strong public support, Radio Hauraki forced a grudging government acceptance and its toehold was strengthened when private broadcasting gained political and legislative recognition. At the start of the 1970s Radio Hauraki relocated from sea to shore and other private radio stations started. Private radio spread as expected, first in Auckland and then in Christchurch and Wellington, though Auckland became dominant as its population and market grew.

Colour television transmission began in 1973. Private television stations remained politically unacceptable and a publicly owned second channel was opened in 1975. These changes required a level of investment that finally put New Zealand's television equipment on a par with that of other advanced economies. This was accompanied by the ending of the NZBC, replaced by the third Labour government with three corporations, one for the publicly owned radio stations and one each for the two television channels. These were to be governed by a Broadcasting Council but in practice were largely independent of council control. Labour also banned any extension of private broadcasting. This 1973 system was politically contentious and shortlived. In 1976 the National government, in two stages, reintroduced a single corporation, the Broadcasting Corporation of

New Zealand (BCNZ). A Broadcasting Tribunal was established principally to extend private broadcasting. FM radio broadcasting was permitted, further private radio stations were begun and a brief form of private television was introduced with the leasing out of time on the BCNZ's TV1. Although the growth of private radio stations was slight under the Broadcasting Tribunal regime, they attracted a disproportionately large audience and emphasised listeners' desire for an alternative to the corporation's broadcasting styles.

From 1975 to 1988 successive governments declined to increase the licence fee paid by the public to the BCNZ. The corporation had to exist more and more on its advertising revenue and broadcasting was transformed as commercial broadcasting became dominant. The public commercial radio stations aped their private counterparts as they competed with them for the radio audience. The two public television channels increased their advertising and commercial programming, moving away from their earlier public service orientation.

These changes meant that the concept of public broadcasting came under question. The concept of full coverage, that the entire country (as far as possible) should be able to receive transmissions, remained constant, but there was less certainty over the programmes to be transmitted. The first public broadcaster, the NZBC, placed little value on and gave low priority to local content. With the exception of the early rivalry between TV1 and SPTV, the television corporations introduced by the third Labour government, neither did its successors. This neglect was nurtured politically. Even after calling for local content in the 1976 Broadcasting Act, New Zealand governments remained unwilling to demand a quota of local material and broadcasters and governments alike were loath to fund this necessarily more expensive programming. Despite calls for an increase, public broadcasting did not include a large proportion of local content.

It had long been understood that one of public broadcasting's tasks was to carry culturally uplifting material. This was best expressed in the support of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (NZSO) and by the programming on the Concert Programme, the new title for the networked YC stations. By the 1980s, however, this consensus had faded. The BCNZ wanted the orchestra removed from its responsibilities and increasingly the Concert Programme was regarded, both politically and publicly, as élitist and unfairly free of the advertising listeners to commercial stations were forced to put up with. The National Programme, the major example of non-commercial radio, also came under growing criticism, particularly for adhering to its traditional role of expressing the country's national unity. This role became contentious and many felt public broadcasting had failed to fulfil various requirements. Minority groups, particularly the country's largest minority, the Maori population, felt their cultures were being neglected by public broadcasting, and suffering as a result. Other pressure

groups, particularly feminists, saw broadcasters, public and private alike, as aligned with an outdated view of a rapidly changing society and unable and unwilling to accept new values.

The concept of public broadcasting is widely regarded as including independent news and current affairs programming but in New Zealand this concept had never attained more than a grudging political acceptance. During the 1960s radio's news bulletins matured and won a public respect and institutional strength that ensured their continuation. Similarly, television's news and current affairs programmes grew in public esteem, even though television became increasingly commercial. But news and current affairs programmes on publicly owned radio and television never gained real political support and there was no political consensus that broadcasting journalism needed to remain in public ownership. Also, as the publicly owned commercial radio stations became indistinguishable from their private counterparts, many questioned whether they should still be publicly owned. The fact that technical advances allowed for more television and radio stations also toppled the long-held policy that broadcasting frequencies were scarce resources requiring public ownership. In the circumstances, all the major political parties reconsidered the administration of broadcasting.

The fourth Labour government, elected in 1984, began New Zealand's most wholesale rearrangement of state activities since the 1930s; the change hit broadcasting in 1988. Radio and television frequencies were deemed to be tradeable commodities best allocated by the logic of the marketplace. The requirements of public broadcasting were definable in legislation rather than the activities of dedicated networks and stations. Programmes meeting the requirements would be produced under the auspices of a Broadcasting Commission and purchased by broadcasting companies. The commission, soon self-dubbed *New Zealand on Air*, was established to allocate the broadcasting licence fee revenue among all broadcasters in return for public service programming. The BCNZ was abolished. The publicly owned radio stations were reformed into RNZ Ltd, the two television channels into TVNZ Ltd. These were not corporation-controlled public broadcasters but state-owned enterprises required to act principally as commercial entities. A third television channel, privately owned, was allowed and many more private radio stations began throughout the country.

The changes, now in place for almost a decade, have been implemented differently for radio and television. Television has followed the new model; the companies are increasingly oriented to programming rather than production. Among their wares are individual public broadcasting programmes commissioned by *New Zealand on Air* in association with one or other of the television broadcasting companies. There has been a burgeoning of independent television production companies. In radio, all

the former publicly owned commercial stations have been sold into private ownership. They have been joined by many new privately owned stations as radio has experienced the greatest growth in its history. Radio also retains much of the earlier system with many stations and networks funded entirely or substantially by the broadcasting fee. This applies particularly to National Radio, Concert FM and a number of Maori radio stations. During the 1990s the situation of radio was regarded by the National coalition government as anomalous and security of funding was always in doubt. Radio and television will continue but their programming styles are fluid and their control and administration contentious. Indeed the fifth Labour government, elected as this history was completed, has made clear that both media will face re-examination and change.

In the years covered by this history New Zealand has moved from the comparative economic equality of the 1950s to a time when concentrations of wealth exist alongside the ravages of widespread unemployment, from a quiet consensus that we are one people to a celebration of differences coupled with rancour at the unequal treatment suffered by various groups, from an isolated and distinctive New Zealand to membership of a global society in which interests and lifestyles are shared as much among different nations as within one country. Broadcasting has been both a cause and an effect in this process of change and has experienced similar upheavals in its nature, conduct and control. But constant throughout the years is the centrality of broadcasting to New Zealand life. Its presence has grown greatly. There has been the introduction of the new medium of television alongside the long-present radio, the establishment of many more stations, both radio and television, and the increase in their hours of transmission to the point where both media have a constant presence. Broadcasting is the arena in which much of our communal life is conducted, from casual conversations about entertainment programmes to the conduct of political elections, from the enjoyment of national sporting contests to the expressions of outrage at heinous crimes. It is the provider of much of our knowledge of events outside our personal experience and of large amounts of our leisure activity. Many of our values, desires and aspirations are mediated through broadcasting. Our society is so reliant on it, for everything from advertising to news, that we could scarcely function without it.

A history such as this is not only a study of the practice of broadcasting with its programmes and personnel. It is a study of the changing society in which the institution of broadcasting is an important part, and of those social and political values that are linked with it. Such values have structured our systems and styles of broadcasting while, in turn, broadcasting has affected our social and political landscapes.

1

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT TO PUBLIC CORPORATION

BROADCASTING IN THE 1950S

In 1950s New Zealand broadcasting meant radio, with all but two stations controlled by a government department, the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS). The non-NZBS stations, 4XD in Dunedin and 2XM in Gisborne, were last remnants of the private stations that had flourished in the 1930s. Otherwise there was no private broadcasting. At its end in 1961, the NZBS controlled 32 stations in New Zealand and one in Apia under secondment to the government of Western Samoa. It broadcast from both commercial and non-commercial stations. Fifteen of the New Zealand stations were non-commercial, nine were commercial and the remaining eight were provincial X-class stations dividing their transmission time between commercial and non-commercial programming.

Although there were fewer of them, the commercial stations drew the great majority of listeners, who were attracted by the lighter, entertainment-oriented fare — from the opening breakfast sessions, to the parade of popular songs, to the evening succession of serials — and the local flavour. Commercial stations were regarded as community stations and expected to perform a number of local services, particularly the advertising of goods and services, but also much regular programming, such as local request sessions, children's hours with the reading of birthday greetings and other personal messages, and community announcements such as sports results or lists of cancellations of fixtures on rainy days. The community stations were also the focus for occasional events, such as the re-emergence of radio telephone appeals, which were conducted in 1955 for the first time since World War II, to raise funds for local charities. That year, after a one-night appeal in Auckland raised more than twice the £50,000 target to purchase equipment for treating cancer, further appeals were made in Christchurch and Palmerston North for the aged and in Invercargill for intellectually handicapped children.¹

The non-commercial stations had their smaller but usually equally appreciative audience. These stations were in two groupings: the YC sta-

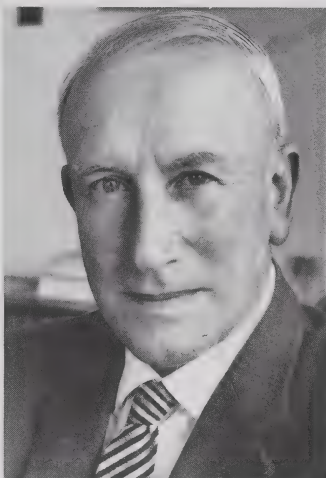
tions in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, plus YA stations in the same centres with an additional seven stations throughout the country also broadcasting the YA programmes. The YC stations broadcast not only classical music but also the proceedings of Parliament and various sports commentaries. These separate aspects cohabited uneasily; effectively the YC stations broadcast separate programmes to distinct audiences. Because the stations could not give full and proper attention to any single area of their programming, their varied audience was dissatisfied: classical music listeners resented the intrusion of sports commentaries, and vice versa.

The YA and associated stations were regarded as the premier stations of the NZBS. They had long been referred to as national stations, indicating both their desired focus and their desired programming, considered superior to that available locally. The stations had been developed deliberately to promote a New Zealand as a national entity rather than a collection of disparate regions and, since the 1930s, the development of national programming had helped to create this cohesion. But the stations' national focus and their programming superiority were not complete. They had always broadcast locally because nothing else was possible, so significant local differences remained, despite co-ordinated programming. Only during the 1950s did greater uniformity begin to develop with the start of a tentative networking via telephone lines. The NZBS planned to make the stations fully national by joining them gradually into a common programme heard throughout the country. It began by linking the YA stations for much of their Sunday programming. This was followed in the late 1950s by a linking of breakfast sessions.

Like their commercial station counterparts, YA listeners appreciated their local programmes and a tension developed as NZBS executives continued the change to a national network while many listeners resented the loss of their local broadcasts. There were numerous temporary halts as protests slowed the ending of local programmes. Such protests were strongest when they gained some political support. In May 1960 the Rotorua station, 1YZ, joined the YA programme breakfast session link when the P&T Department opened its first Auckland–Rotorua wide-band circuit. As in other centres, there were as many complaints about the loss of the local breakfast session as there was appreciation of the new national link. Rotorua, however, was the home electorate of Raymond Boord, the minister of broadcasting, who ordered a reversal. J. H. E. Schroder, the NZBS director, described this as a 'severe public rebuff' to his department and wondered if he would be able to deny any other stations that wished to withdraw.² But the change was inexorable and gradually 1YZ and all other stations on the YA link moved closer to a single national programme. Because the wide-band telephone lines on which the national link initially depended did not, as expected, relay music to an acceptable standard, the



William Yates. NZMA



J H E Schroder. NZMA

network was neither complete nor satisfactory until the 1960s use of microwave links.

The national unity of YA programming also met broadcasters' wish to raise the cultural appreciation of the audience. This strong acceptance of a Reithian broadcasting philosophy among senior broadcasting executives was inherited from the inaugural director of the NZBS, James Shelley. His successors during the 1950s were William Yates, appointed in 1949 after the Shelley's retirement, and John Schroder, who succeeded Yates in 1958 and himself retired in 1961. Yates was an internal appointee whereas Schroder joined the NZBS in 1949 as assistant director after a period with the *Press*. His was an unusual appointment because he came from outside the public service. He was invited to apply and was shepherd through the appeal procedure.³ As Yates told *Listener* editor Monte Holcroft, 'There has to be somebody at the top of broadcasting who knows about music, who can speak other languages and understands the arts.' Shelley possessed these skills but Yates regarded himself as deficient in such areas and warmly supported Schroder's appointment as redressing the balance. That Yates regarded these as essential traits is one indication of his continued belief that broadcasting's primary purpose is the education and cultural elevation of the audience. Schroder shared this understanding. He and Yates continued Shelley's broadcasting style and added to it an administrative competence not always present in their charismatic but less efficient predecessor.

In fact, the Reithian philosophy was of limited relevance to New Zealand. It was more applicable to the non-commercial stations, where an anonymous announcing style and developing networking gave some uniformity, but a fun-loving individuality and spirit of independence had been submerged in a requirement for an authoritative solemnity. In the non-commercial stations, individual differences and local orientations were accepted. Entertainment rather than instruction was the focus and, along with commercial advertising itself, constituted significant difference between the two types of broadcasting. There were experiments in uniformity on the commercial side. In 1960, for instance, 2ZB and 3ZB did a six-week trial of pre-recorded taped breakfast programmes. Although regarded as helpful in times of staff shortages and in emergencies, the procedure would have 'no future . . . as a regular part of our broadcasting'. It was too difficult to adapt to daily changes in circumstances; 2ZB particularly lamented the handling of the St Patrick's Day broadcast.⁴ This experiment was seen as a failure and helped to confirm the orientation to local broadcasting with regional variations. In 1960 Schroder dropped the long-standing NZBS requirement for announcer anonymity and encouraged commercial announcers to develop as personalities. In commercial radio, local innovation became encouraged, sought after and expected.⁵

Although broadcasting's directors had a personal preference for non-commercial programming there was little understanding in New Zealand, as there was overseas, of public broadcasting as a definite radio style. In particular, the understanding of public broadcasting as non-commercial did not hold sway. The NZBS had an effective monopoly of broadcasting and a full monopoly of commercial radio. All its broadcasting was public, maintained and controlled by the government for the people as a whole. Both National and Labour governments accepted the duty to make radio coverage as universal as possible. Radio reception was both a right of citizenship and a necessary part of national efficiency. But the programming was governed by a simple understanding that everything was part of the state's public broadcasts.

No one considered whether the commercial stations' combination of commercial and community activities was economically profitable. The NZBS income was a mixture of commercial revenue and of licence fees paid by listeners, after the Post Office subtracted its collection charges. Although the earnings from fees were substantial, most of the department's income came from radio advertising. In 1957, for example, NZBS income almost reached £2 million, with listeners' licence fees exceeding £765,000, and advertising sales totalling £1.01 million, passing the £1 million mark for the first time. In spite of its domination of broadcasting, the department was generally unable to return a financial profit though it did provide revenue for the government through taxation. Again for the 1957 year, the commercial stations and the *Listener* made a surplus of

£205,249. They were assessed for tax separately rather than submerging their profits within the costs of the larger NZBS so, with a taxation payment of £105,797, the surplus was reduced to a £99,452 profit. This was then offset by the losses on the national stations (£26,021) and the National Orchestra (£88,243) so the entire NZBS had a deficit of £14,812.⁶ Commercial broadcasting subsidised the non-commercial activities of the NZBS. It was a procedure that was later followed in the development of television.

The NZBS accounting procedure always regarded the licence fee income as income for the national stations. This obscured the fact that listeners were required to pay the compulsory fee no matter what station they listened to and that the commercial stations were very much the audience favourites. The procedure did, though, make financial sense in that, if the licence fee income had been apportioned between the commercial and non-commercial stations, it would have added to the commercial stations' surplus and therefore their tax burden. The approach also reflected New Zealand's understanding, adopted from Britain, that non-commercial broadcasting was supported by a licence fee rather than by advertising. In New Zealand, however, there was considerable interchange between commercial and non-commercial stations and Britain and New Zealand had different understandings of the nature of public broadcasting. In Britain public broadcasting was non-commercial and separated from the government by its corporation control. In New Zealand the NZBS was a government department and operated both commercial and non-commercial stations which, in practice, were not financially separate.

BROADCASTING POLICY AND TELEVISION

Although all broadcasting was radio in the 1950s, the introduction of television was the most important issue of the decade. Increasingly it dominated policy consideration: when should it be introduced and how should it be administered? In July 1949 the Labour government set up what was known as the Interdepartmental Committee to consider the introduction of television. The director of the Broadcasting Service was the chair and the other three members were the NZBS chief engineer and the chief engineer and a divisional engineer from the P&T Department. Initially the committee's focus was merely exploratory. In 1949 broadcasting was still emerging from a period of post-war hardship. What development funds there were went on founding the X-class stations and upgrading the other stations' weary equipment. After Labour lost the 1949 election to National, the committee went into abeyance until 1958, when Labour was again in power. At that point representatives from the Treasury and the Department of Industries and Commerce were added. There was a great deal to consider before television could be introduced to New Zealand but

in the 1950s political procrastination was an added factor. The introduction of television was widely regarded as inevitable, eventually, particularly after Australian television began in 1956. Arnold Wall, writing in 1954, judged 1959 or 1960 as the likely time for it to start in New Zealand: 'once it's established in Australia no government here will be able to withstand popular pressure to get it installed'.⁷ Wall was correct. The National government waited until public pressure forced television's acceptance. It continued its Labour predecessor's attitude that broadcasting was a difficult charge requiring continuing control and little opportunity for growth or, especially, independence.

When it came to power in 1949, the first National administration decided to continue radio broadcasting as a government department, even though this clashed with its private enterprise philosophy. Unlike the Labour Party, National's membership, as distinct from its caucus and Cabinet, favoured private control of broadcasting. Thus, during the 1950s the National government not only shared with Labour a general unwillingness to allow further innovation in communication technology, but with the split in its party thinking had an additional reluctance to address the issue and to decide whether television should be operated as a government department or by private enterprise. During the 1950s New Zealand, historically an early and rapid adopter of communication technologies, became an international laggard with respect to television.

FIRST STEPS IN NEW ZEALAND TELEVISION

Robert Jack, professor of physics at the University of Otago, was a pioneer not only of radio but also of television within New Zealand. His television experiments began in 1924 and four years later he was able to transmit within his laboratory. As Jim Sullivan notes, 'Jack's work was similar to that being carried out about the same time in Britain by John Logie Baird, the "inventor" of television.' Further experiments continued among the Dunedin broadcasting fraternity and in 1931 one member, James McKewen of the private radio station 4ZM, applied unsuccessfully for a licence to broadcast television.⁸ New Zealand was poised to be in the vanguard of world television development but official refusal thwarted progress for another two decades.

The NZBS's first practical involvement with television took place in March 1951 when it combined forces with Amalgamated Wireless (Australia) Ltd to present closed circuit television demonstrations. AWA supplied a 'basic set of technical equipment with operating staff'.⁹ The demonstrations were to have been held in the four main centres but the industrial disruption of the 151-day waterfront dispute prevented Christchurch and Dunedin being included. The demonstrations lasted for 10 days each in Wellington and Auckland. Each day featured six half-hour



Douglas Kessell and Cherry Raymond performing at the 1951 television trials in Auckland. William Austin, then NZBS Executive Drama Producer for Auckland and later the NZBC Head of Drama, is on the right.

ROBIN C WOOD PHOTOGRAPHY

programmes chosen for their diversity, to publicise the educational, informational and entertainment range of television. Studio audiences were invited. Most were of a general mix but there were some specialist groups, mainly educationalists but in one case medical personnel. One of the highlights of the Auckland demonstrations was the appearance of Daisy Basham, Aunt Daisy, the unquestioned first lady of radio. James Hartstonge, the Auckland programme organiser, invited her to attempt to translate her usual radio programme into visual terms. Her demonstration of a multi-cooker followed a local zookeeper's introduction of a chimpanzee. The sudden appearance of bananas, which had been hidden in the cooker, prompted the return of the chimp and was the only occasion when Basham was rendered speechless before an audience.¹⁰

The engineering division of the NZBS, in particular, wanted television introduced as soon as possible and the 1951 demonstrations were regarded as 'a gentle attempt' to sway public opinion and force the government's hand.¹¹ As the NZBS pointed out, the demonstrations were followed with great interest by the public,¹² but the inability to include the South Island hampered this effect. The demonstrations had no effect on the government's procrastination.

The NZBS lost any eagerness for television's quick introduction when, later in 1951, two of its engineers, Noel Palmer and S. W. McDonald, were sent overseas to investigate the matter of technical standards, especially the number of lines in the picture. This, to a large extent, determines the fidelity of the picture and amount of detail the viewer can see. In general, the more lines, the more detail. There was no world standard. The United States had begun with 441 lines but had moved to 525. Britain started in 1936 with 405 lines. It introduced 625-line UHF transmissions in the mid-1960s and 405-line VHF transmissions continued in parallel for a further 20 years. After an extensive tour through the United States, Britain and the European television-playing countries, Palmer and McDonald returned with a recommendation, which was accepted provisionally and released in a report in September 1953, that New Zealand should adopt the British system of 405 lines. In practice this was a pro forma recommendation; the engineers' real advice to their superiors was to do nothing and accept the government's wait and see approach.

Palmer and McDonald were not impressed with their first look at television. They considered the 'quality of what was being broadcast was diabolical, absolutely terrible' and failed to see television in New Zealand 'commanding a public audience unless it was very much better'.¹³ Their caution was communicated to their superiors. The 1953 report delayed rather than accelerated television's introduction. People outside broadcasting, notably a group associated with the University of Auckland Physics Department, voiced considerable criticism of the standards selected, particularly the 405-line system. The criticism suited the government's reluctance and the minister decided to wait until the matter was clarified. In 1954 the government held that television would be introduced 'at some time' but 'was far from satisfied that it would be wise' to do so immediately.¹⁴ Within the NZBS there was further dispute over the type of sound to adopt. The choice was between AM, or amplitude modulation, which the BBC had and which was the New Zealand experience, and FM, or frequency modulation, which was the American system. AM was chosen but some engineers felt pressured into that choice and they doubted if it was technically justified.¹⁵

WAITING: 1952–58

The political reluctance to hasten the advent of television was aided by many who had a prejudice against the medium. Television was widely regarded, especially among the more educated, as innately unworthy and likely to lead to a lowering of cultural standards. Brian Bell, later an influential early television producer with the NZBC, was introduced to the medium when he was offered a training position with the BBC drama division. 'My immediate reaction to that was, "Television indeed. I am not

interested in television.” I got very high hat about the whole thing.’ Bell soon changed his mind, ‘wrote a letter with a good deal of humble pie in it’ and began a new career.¹⁶ But his initial attitude was not unusual. Even after television’s introduction it was still widely regarded as having come too soon, with unhappy cultural consequences. As the trade union leader, Tom Skinner, noted, ‘With more planning there could also have been a greater degree of cultural and educational value in programmes more attuned to the New Zealand way of life than the imported “pop culture”.’

Various prominent figures within New Zealand offered their arguments against television: a common theme was the cost of the medium. Skinner was one such authority. ‘During my visit to the United States, Canada and Britain in 1956 I studied television as well as radio developments and returned with the view that New Zealand should have a television facility — but not too soon. Had we waited longer, to take advantage of technical services abroad, it could have been introduced at less ultimate expense to the people.’¹⁷ Such arguments have only a partial force. The broadcasting media, like technology generally, were and are on a road of progress that shows little sign of ending. The cost of such changes must be accepted. It is doubtful if there was ever a best time, financially, to introduce television. The cost of the medium, however, is heavy, especially compared with radio, and politicians in particular regarded this as a powerful reason for delay. Such views were supported during the 1950s by the service’s financial record: the impecunious NZBS was not to be allowed a further charge on the country’s resources.

Planning for television within the NZBS was piecemeal. For fear that it would excite public eagerness the department was not permitted to prepare itself for the eventual introduction. Many New Zealanders went overseas deliberately to become involved with television. Within the NZBS a few employees had some prior experience. Ernie Black was one. He had joined 2ZB in 1941 and had become a technician by default when most of the adult technicians were overseas on war duties: ‘half a dozen lads ran the station’. In 1957 Black went to the United States to represent the NZBS in a 22-week seminar that was mainly on television and included work in television stations. ‘I got a job for a month in a television station in Missouri where I was a general dogsbody . . . It was marvellous.’ But his experience was an exception: ‘it made me just about the only person in the NZBS who had seen the inside of a television station’.¹⁸

Many technicians working in radio were preparing themselves unofficially for television. ‘It was the new technology,’ said David Kay of Christchurch. ‘We wanted to be involved.’ Technicians in Christchurch were more prepared than most because they lived in the home town of Bernard Withers and Hec Alexander. Withers, a senior lecturer in electrical engineering at Canterbury University College, and his senior students conducted various television experiments. Closed circuit transmissions were

made in 1951 and, from 1952, their station, ZL3XT, was broadcasting in Christchurch, albeit on a very low power and to a city with very few television receivers. Many broadcasting technicians first learnt about television from Withers. This knowledge was added to by Alexander, the senior NZBS technician in Christchurch. He set up a study group among his colleagues; each member was assigned topics to research and lecture on.¹⁹

But these were individual acts of self-education. Within the department the long years of waiting and indecision were not used to prepare for television. NZBS engineers knew what was required and felt the delay keenly. One of them, Alan Richardson, has commented, 'covering a country with a whole complex of television transmitters, finding the sites for them, finding what coverage they gave, finding where there were holes in the coverage because people are down valleys and shaded by hills and all that kind of thing . . . we should have been doing that.'²⁰

ROY AND PAT KENNARD

Not everyone spent the years waiting for television. The most significant of the lay enthusiasts who took up the new medium were the husband and wife team of Roy and Pat Kennard; their achievements took them well out of the amateur ranks. They purchased their first television equipment in 1952, having received an experimental licence after Pat made a personal plea to C. A. McFarlane, the director-general of the P&T Department, who had also been the major of the Army's Education and Welfare Unit, in which she had served during the war. The Kennards purchased cameras and monitors but built most of the rest of their equipment themselves. They began demonstrating television at fairs and exhibitions around New Zealand, starting with the Invercargill Centennial Exhibition in 1953. They ran film but mainly televised live the events on the main stage, relaying them to six receiving sets. Over the next years the Kennards did many television demonstrations throughout the country, often incorporating this with promotional work for such organisations as the Wool Board, and thousands of New Zealanders saw television for the first time courtesy of this pioneering couple. In the years of waiting for the start of broadcast television they were the exceptions, having a 'busy, busy time . . . demonstrating what television was'.²¹

PYE

The Kennards were not the only people demonstrating television. In 1954, starting at the Royal Wellington Show in January and continuing at the Auckland Easter Show in April and then at various provincial locations, Pye (NZ) Ltd, with the backing of its British parent company, demonstrated television. The equipment was rudimentary. The programmes were broad-

cast over a mere 50-watt transmitter and Pye had to supply the receiving sets, 50 in all, for the audience.²² Various NZBS engineers were lent receivers, among them Alan Richardson, who viewed the Wellington transmissions from his home in Upper Hutt. He reports the sound as good but the picture as 'execrable. You could see the announcer in a maze of hail.' Reception, however, was considerably better at the Wellington Show where the demonstrations were extremely popular and many New Zealanders first saw television there. Pye was associated with various New Zealand firsts: the televising of quiz shows, when Selwyn Toogood's Wellington Show quizzes were broadcast, the first prime-ministerial appearance on television, when Sidney Holland was pictured opening the Wellington Show, and the first televising of a rugby match, in July at Waihi, the base for Pye's radio-set production. Although the demonstrations increased public awareness of television, the company failed in its larger goal: to manufacture television receiving sets in New Zealand. As Boyd-Bell indicates, the demonstrations were 'the first major push by a commercial organisation to . . . pressure the government to reach a decision on how and when television would be introduced'.²³ The government was unmoved.

BELL

In May 1957 further television broadcasts took place, this time in Auckland, transmitted on channel one from Experimental Station ZL1XQ, which was owned by the Bell Radio-Television Corporation, a Dominion Road-based radio manufacturer. The principal of the company, Al Bell, wanted to make television sets, not broadcast television. Like those of his radio predecessors in the 1920s and 1930s, his broadcasts were attempts to create and excite an audience that would wish to purchase receiving sets. Like Pye, he was also hoping the would-be audience would induce the government to act. Bell became a highly popular Auckland identity who, more than any other, seized the moment to finally force television's introduction.

Like Pye before him, Bell gave demonstrations in many towns but it was his Auckland transmissions that were his real contribution towards New Zealand television broadcasting. Within two months Bell was on the air for three hours per night three nights per week. Although there were only a few hundred receiving sets in Auckland, they included sets Bell had donated to hospitals, old people's homes and other sites that rated high in public esteem. The government placed many difficulties in Bell's way: he had to change his frequency three times and move from the 405- to the 625-line system after the government's 1958 announcement that the latter would be standard in New Zealand. Even those who officially opposed him, however, regarded Bell with affection. To the permanent head of the P&T Department Bell was 'a loveable character', one who 'flies in the face



Al Bell, on the left, and Charles McFarlane. NZMA

of authority with a big smile, knowing very well it will come his way in the long run'.²⁴

Most at the NZBS wanted the early introduction of television; at the higher levels, Gilbert Stringer, a senior executive, and Leslie Harrison, the director of engineering, were particularly keen. Bell, Stringer and Harrison were on good terms and Stringer later became a director of Bell Radio. Harrison and Bell were described as 'great friends' and as 'in cahoots' over these early transmissions.²⁵ This co-operation was general from Auckland employees of the NZBS, who appeared on camera in Bell's transmissions. As Lionel Sceats, from 1959 the district manager in Auckland, notes, 'Some of our people, Ian Watkins for instance, did some announcing for him.'²⁶

Bell transmitted what he could. He obtained films from many sources and numerous Auckland entertainers, professional and amateur, performed in his factory studio with their efforts broadcast live. He was beyond the terms of his licence since officially his transmissions were restricted to 'still pictures or pictures of a repetitive nature'. He and the 12 others who had received permission since 1951 to transmit experimental programmes were prohibited from transmitting material 'having any entertainment value or which in any way catered for a general viewing public'. The restriction had been largely ignored and unpoliced. Most of the 12, including the NZBS in its transmissions, had endeavoured to be entertaining. At the start of the decade, high public interest was applauded but by its end this was regarded

as a problem, that could result 'in the country being pushed into television too soon'. In March 1959 Bell was considered to be broadcasting entertaining programmes and therefore breaking the terms of his licence. He was not stopped from transmitting but restricted to the terms of his licence. This had little more than a temporary effect. The episode created public discussion and parliamentary debate, indicating for New Zealand television, as for radio, that new private ventures excited general interest and support and politicians were loath to quarrel with that opinion.²⁷

Bell's final programmes were broadcast in September 1960. In regard both to placing some type of transmission before the public and encouraging the government to take action, his transmissions were superfluous once the NZBS began its own. With Bell, what J. L. Hartstonge referred to in 1951 as a gentle push for the government towards allowing television, had now become a hearty shove. Bell changed the broadcasting environment in New Zealand by making television transmissions a regular event rather than an abstract and distant prospect. Furthermore he pushed at the boundaries of the restrictions on what he was allowed to transmit. In effect he became, as Boyd-Bell notes, a pirate broadcaster who could not be closed down, for political fear of upsetting public opinion.²⁸ Governmental fears were justified and public expectations for the medium grew considerably from the time Bell's transmissions began.

LABOUR AND THE INTRODUCTION OF TELEVISION

Bell may have been, in Hartstonge's words, 'the catalyst in the move towards organised television',²⁹ but a political decision was still required. Soon after the start of Bell's transmissions and with a timing that indicated he was giving National's 1957 election policy on television, R. M. Algie, the minister, made it clear there was no change in the government's attitude. 'It was frankly true and the public should know it, that he was not in a hurry to get a television service going.'³⁰ It was at this election, however, that the Labour Party changed its policy and began to favour the introduction of television. Labour had one member, the Reverend Clyde Carr, himself a former radio announcer, who regularly called for the introduction of television. 'Why this unconscionable, inexplicable and unjustifiable delay in making available to the people a scientific advance and a cultural development that had prevailed in Britain for twenty-one years and was rapidly spreading throughout the world arresting the attention of all intelligent and progressive people?' Carr acknowledged that his was 'a voice in the wilderness' but in 1957 his party began to catch up with him.³¹ Unlike their National opponents, the Labour caucus and party were united in the view that television should be state controlled. Although Labour also showed no haste to introduce television, its certainty about the control of television meant it could seize the initiative when there was political advan-

tage in doing so. This happened during the 1957 election campaign. The broadcaster, Ian Watkins, stood for Labour, though unsuccessfully, in the Eden electorate. The Labour leader, Walter Nash, allowed him to announce that if Labour won it would introduce television within its first three years.³²

Labour won the election and Nash appointed Raymond Boord as minister of broadcasting but Labour demurred about television once it was in office. In 1958 the government was faced with a balance of payments crisis. While the Opposition contended that the crisis was largely manufactured by the government, used to justify its economic policy and 'sold' to the country by a 'national broadcasting network . . . used for . . . party political propaganda purposes', the government's new priority was to conserve its overseas funds. It announced various measures, among them the postponement of any action on television.³³

So at the start of 1958 the Labour government, like its predecessor, appeared unwilling to consider the introduction of television. This was reflected in the NZBS annual report which indicated not only that television's early arrival remained unlikely but also that the already agreed purchase of television equipment to test coverage had been deferred.³⁴ This, however, disguised differing views within the government. Michael Moohan, the postmaster-general, joined the agitation for television's introduction. He and his department, which was the regulating body for all broadcasting, wished to move Bell's irregular broadcasts onto a more official footing. They also considered that if such action was not taken, the Kennards in Christchurch would follow Bell's example and start telecasting in that city.³⁵

Boord's strategy regarding television was to reactivate the Interdepartmental Committee to consider the topic. The committee's first announcement was the release in July 1958 of a supposedly nationwide television coverage plan. In fact, it divided the country into 16 areas that were not interconnected but merely compass circles drawn on the map. It did, however, define Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin as the cities in which coverage would begin and specified that all four would begin in the lower television band, channels one to three. This was important because there were other users. Civil aviation and the Air Force had distance measuring equipment in television bands, as did the Army with its land mobile equipment. Previously the view had been that these bands could be shared by the various users but now the non-broadcasting users began to move out of the lower bands, thus enabling the first pilot stations to be set up.

A further recommendation from the committee, accepted and announced by the minister and the postmaster-general in August 1958, was that the 625-line system would be the New Zealand standard. This was a brave decision for this system was not then used in Australia, Britain

or the United States. Palmer and McDonald had become aware of the 625-line system during their 1951 tour when it was a topic of considerable discussion in Europe but merely 'a gleam in a lot of eyes . . . nobody was actually using it'.³⁶ During the mid-1950s the system became firmly established as a European standard, though it was not adopted then in either France or Britain. It also became apparent that many Asian countries were considering it. This led to a reappraisal in New Zealand and the decision that the 625-line system, 'used in practically every country except Great Britain', according to Boord, would be adopted.³⁷ The decision to change to 625 lines gave New Zealand the system which has become the world standard and which incorporated the potential for a future adoption of colour.

The P&T Department was the loser from the decision. At the time of the 625-line announcement, the department was well advanced on its introduction of a coaxial cable network between Auckland and Wellington. It brought a great increase in capacity and, with the agreement of the NZBS, included provision for television transmission. But the television capacity was for the British standard of 405 lines so the change to a 625-line standard rendered the P&T network inappropriate for television transmission. There was no surplus capacity, for the P&T Department's own usage steadily increased and in the 1960s the NZBC's development of its own network and reluctance to use the P&T's led to considerable friction between the two organisations.³⁸

In 1958, therefore, a New Zealand government finally began preparations for television but, in spite of Labour's new television policy, the minister showed no haste, making it clear that the preparations were not a formal acceptance of television. Speaking in August at the start of Parliament's second session he said that 'even if the decision to go ahead were made immediately it would be two years before television were introduced'.³⁹

NZBS AUCKLAND TELEVISION

In October 1958 the Cabinet finally approved the deferred expenditure of £16,000 by the NZBS to purchase equipment for experimental television transmissions in Auckland. The announcement came as a surprise not only to the public but also to the NZBS engineers, who had no advance warning. Once the decision was made, the matter was treated with urgency. In a prodigious burst of activity the NZBS prepared for and began its transmissions on channel two on 23 February 1959.

The preparations began with telephone calls to the Marconi company in England which agreed to put a packet together from what was immediately available to be dispatched on the first available ship. Ernie Black was sent to Auckland in late December when the equipment arrived and he

joined a team that 'put the station together in about five weeks'. This included, along with assembling and learning to use the equipment, constructing a studio and two control rooms within the NZBS Auckland premises in Shortland Street.⁴⁰ Sceats, the Auckland district manager at the time, described the engineering team as doing 'magnificent work', working 'night and day because the directive was this has got to be done in a hurry'. The pressure to complete the station quickly also came from within the NZBS. The senior engineer at the Auckland installation was McDonald who 'had been thinking television for years' and was fulfilling a long-held ambition. His subordinates shared his ambition and enthusiasm: 'We slept on the job almost . . . The pressures . . . we made ourselves because of our enthusiasm.'

Little attention was paid to transmission and there was no expectation that it would need to allow for extensive coverage. A transmitter was mounted on a small tower standing on the roof of the Shortland Street studios and this combined studio/transmitter complex operated until permanent transmission facilities were built at Waiatarua. Although Bell described the reception as 'magnificent' when he telephoned his congratulations,⁴¹ Shortland Street was not a good site for a transmitter and at 500 watts the station was low-powered. It gave regular good reception only over a radius of less than 20 miles. The sound transmission was the first New Zealand broadcast of FM sound, which, for the engineers involved, was among the most pleasing aspects of the transmissions.

The broadcasts, referred to as experimental television transmissions, were intended to allow the department to plan for but not hasten television's introduction. The public must not become excited about television. Only test patterns were supposed to be televised but NZBS staff did ensure that the first broadcast was properly introduced with a human face. The announcer for the first test transmission was Joyce Davenport, an Auckland NZBS receptionist; her make-up was done by Ernie Black. National Film Unit (NFU) newsreels were added to the test patterns, though the entertainment value of old documentaries about possum control and the Queen's 1953 visit was doubtful. Generally the engineers were unconcerned with the content of the transmissions. For them, and for the ministers, technical quality was the point.

Of course there was considerable public interest so the NZBS broadcasts proved unpopular with authorities and the minister stopped the transmissions in the second week: 'We were told to mothball the station,' reported Ernie Black. It was not until three months later, on 18 May 1959, that weekly scheduled test programmes began for two hours on Monday nights. Although more than test patterns were broadcast, the transmissions were still regarded as tests in which entertainment was inappropriate. Enforcing such a requirement was as difficult with the NZBS as it was with Bell. The first scheduled test programme was introduced by



C. R. Hexter-Stabbins announcing the first scheduled test programmes for the NZBS on 18 May 1959. NZMA

C. R. Hexter-Stabbins, a IYA radio announcer who was chosen by Sceats for his 'phenomenal appearance. He was the nearest thing to Jimmy Edwards that you ever saw.'⁴²

Novel and entertaining as the Auckland broadcasts were, they were run on a very small budget which initially did not include money for programme material. This financial stringency was enforced as the Labour government did not wish either to hasten the purchase of television sets or give any de facto indication that the NZBS would be in control of television production and transmission. Alf Dick, at head office in Wellington, was in charge of providing film for the Auckland station. 'I had to beg, borrow, steal and scrounge whatever I could get to send up to Auckland . . . I had to have it free.' Dick took from whatever organisation would donate material, so the Auckland viewers suffered publicity material from the British and American embassies, from the National Film Library and from the Departments of Agriculture, Labour and Transport. Dick recalls having 'an argument with Auckland' when he sent to New Zealand's largest urban centre 'a lovely little agricultural film on dog dosing'.⁴³ This system continued until mid-1960.

Television sets were wanted and manufacturers were eager to move. Bell announced early in 1959 that he was ready to begin mass production but with others signalling similar intentions it was obvious that he was not alone. The minister, however, thwarted this possibility by changing the customs classification for television tubes from a general classification to a

tariff item on their own. Would-be importers now had to make individual applications for these essential components. This meant that the granting or withholding of permission to import tubes would determine the number of television sets in the country. Justifying his action, the minister argued that the presence of large numbers of television sets would 'inevitably create the very pressure for the early and premature introduction of the service which the Government wishes to avoid'.⁴⁴ By the time Boord effectively stalled television manufacture, there were some 1300 licensed television sets in Auckland, 1000 of them purchased from Auckland manufacturers, principally Bell's company.⁴⁵

THE CONTROL OF TELEVISION

In February 1959 Boord invited submissions from interested parties as to how television should be run; these would be presented to and heard by the Interdepartmental Committee, now enlarged with representatives from Treasury and the Department of Industries and Commerce. The committee was still chaired by Schroder and, in spite of the additions to its membership, was still composed entirely of public servants who were in no position to determine the political question of the control of television. The government had no intention of allowing anyone else to control television and Boord's move had the considerable benefit of restricting public discussion.

The government's action was opposed by many who argued that the topic required a Royal Commission, as had happened in Australia in 1953 before television was introduced. The *Waikato Times*, for example, noting the minister's comment that the broadcasting service was preparing a full report on television, supported the call for a Royal Commission which 'would give wide publicity . . . and help shape public opinion'. The NZBS 'will either be in opposition to or will control television A recommendation from a department vitally interested is not the way to ensure the best possible result.'⁴⁶ Such calls were in vain. Two years before, the National government had also considered and rejected the proposal,⁴⁷ and Labour had no intention of appointing a Royal Commission. The difficulty with a commission, for both Labour and National, was that it required the government's prior announcement of decisions it was unwilling to make. The NZBS pointed out to the government that in Britain, Canada and Australia Parliament had taken the decisions on the form of control for television. Before the Royal Commission in Australia, the government had passed the Television Act of 1953 with the decision that for television, as for radio, there would be government non-commercial and private commercial stations. The commission was required to recommend how that decision should be carried out. New Zealand's government refused to follow suit.

One of the many submissions to the Interdepartmental Committee came from the Visual Investigation Syndicate which consisted of the five major newspapers in the north of the North Island along with the *Daily Mail* of London. Their contribution was significant since it indicated newspaper proprietors' preferred future for television. The syndicate's chairman, R. D. Horton, managing director of the *New Zealand Herald*, advocated a dual television system, a state-run non-commercial service and a commercial system controlled by local private ownership. Horton hoped that commercial television coverage in the north would be provided by his syndicate.⁴⁸ This was not the only newspaper appearance before the committee. The directors of Blundell Brothers and the Wellington Publishing Co., the proprietors respectively of the *Evening Post* and the *Dominion*, also expressed their wish 'to participate in the operation of a television service'.⁴⁹ The minister also stated that 'a certain weekly newspaper of not very good repute', presumably *Truth*, had 'offered to take over television'.⁵⁰ Presumably, if any of these applications were successful, other newspaper proprietors elsewhere in the country would come forward with proposals for their areas. The applications had strength because the one group from private enterprise with the strongest claim to run television, owing to its long association with journalism, was the Newspaper Proprietors' Association (NPA). The newspaper proprietors' proposals were supported by many such as the long-term broadcaster, Selwyn Toogood who, in his submission to the committee, saw television news and current affairs as best controlled by newspaper journalists and argued that NZBS control was inappropriate. 'It's not possible for a government department to allow a full range of controversy in respect of matters concerning the government of the day.'⁵¹

But any proposal that involved the extension of newspaper interests into broadcasting was bound to be viewed unfavourably by a New Zealand Labour government. Labour's view was expressed by Norman Kirk, MP for Lyttelton, who saw any promotion of private television as designed 'to preserve the uniformity of view which tends mainly to favour conservative views and policies'.⁵² As a major medium for public expression, television must be kept out of the hands of an anti-Labour press. This attitude had not changed in its essentials since Labour first took radio broadcasting to itself in 1936.

Like newspapers, cinema would be vitally affected by television. Movie attendances in all countries had fallen after the adoption of television and the same could be expected in New Zealand. The New Zealand Motion Picture Exhibitors' Association regarded the introduction of television as 'detrimental to our national economy' not least because it 'would disastrously affect the motion picture industry'. One tactic for the association was to try to delay the inevitable. It saw no evidence that New Zealanders had any general desire for television and argued for a referendum to be

held on whether to introduce the medium.⁵³ Another tactic was to copy the NPA and try to become involved in television. R. J. Kerridge, writing on behalf of the Telecasting Corporation of New Zealand Ltd, a company whose interim shareholding was held by Philips Electrical Industries and Kerridge Odeon, argued for this. Kerridge Odeon was one of New Zealand's two principal cinema owners and Kerridge submitted that his firm should 'be permitted to participate in this new entertainment field' as a partial consideration for the 'catastrophic impact of television on cinema attendances'.⁵⁴ Like the NPA, he was told that private enterprise was not to be associated with television. Nor was the introduction to be stopped, although there was some delay to suit cinema owners. Speaking in July 1960, when AKTV2's transmissions were increased from one to four nights a week, Boord acknowledged that he had not allowed the Auckland station to broadcast on Saturday nights 'because of the possible effects on attendances at cinemas'. But he also noted that such a ban would not be long-lasting.⁵⁵ New Zealand cinema proprietors had no choice but to brace themselves for the change.

The minister also revealed a further application to start television in New Zealand. This came from Sir Arthur Warner, chairman of directors of Electronics Industries Ltd of Melbourne, chairman of station GTB of Melbourne and a minister in the Victorian government — 'not of the same political colour as I,' said Boord. Warner proposed to start three private television stations in New Zealand, in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Warner's plan foundered on more than Labour's antipathy to private enterprise controlling the medium. It also presented a difficulty that would make it hard for any New Zealand government to accept: Warner's plan was only for the three largest population centres and the difficulty was how to ensure that coverage was extended beyond them.⁵⁶

Attention to the other end of the coverage spectrum, and the political spectrum, came from W. B. Sutch, then the Secretary of Industry and Commerce, who, in a booklet published by his department, advocated a plan to cover two-thirds of the population within six years at a cost of £7.3 million. P. N. Holloway, Sutch's minister, described the booklet as 'in the main a factual survey of the economics'. These facts, however, were marshalled around a contentious portrayal. Sutch allowed for any system but made it clear that he did not support private ownership and control and in fact did not favour commercial television at all. The Opposition chose to interpret these views as the result of an apparent government instruction to Sutch to pave the way for government control of television.⁵⁷ After various comments that Sutch's proposal was 'political propaganda', Holloway said his secretary's proposal was 'a contribution to knowledge . . . the Department was pleased to publish'.⁵⁸ Apart from his espousal of government control, Sutch's views would not have pleased the government. Not only was he advocating the introduction of television in advance of any

definite government statement but his plan envisaged four stations at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, each of two channels, plus six single-channel stations at Hamilton, Palmerston North, New Plymouth, Hastings, Nelson and Invercargill. It pictured a local rather than a centrally controlled framework and was the most ambitious coverage proposal yet published, well in excess of the scheme that was eventually introduced.

The Interdepartmental Committee recommended to the minister that no particular matters needed to restrict the start of television. New Zealand presented no special technical problems in the transmission of television programmes and there were no strong reasons for delaying until colour television was a commercial proposition. Representatives from Philips Electrical Industries and from Bell Radio, both would-be television set manufacturers, argued that it was 'too big a step' for the New Zealand industry to begin with colour. The manufacturers also advised against starting transmissions in all the principal cities simultaneously for fear of expanding their manufacturing base 'beyond its ultimate capacity to supply the consumer demand once the initial filling up process has taken place'. The committee accepted this self-serving argument since it mirrored the NZBS desire. Although New Zealand had no topographical problems not shared by other countries, its terrain was such that these difficulties would often occur. Because there would be coverage problems at least equivalent to those experienced in radio coverage, a gradual introduction was needed. This should start in Auckland, then extend to Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin and later to provincial centres. On the basis of radio experience, the committee regarded advertising as inevitable and recommended it 'be admitted to television programmes from the outset'. Without specifically calling for the NZBS to be the television broadcaster the committee recommended exactly that. 'The simpler and more prudent view appears to be recommended by the need to ensure that, in New Zealand's present and expectable situation, all resources should be as effectively channelled as possible. The establishment of a single service should provide for that.'⁵⁹

RADIO WITH PICTURES

Although it was clear that television would be introduced eventually and that, as least while Labour remained in power, it would be administered through a government department, it was not decided if that department would be the NZBS. The other contender was the Tourist and Publicity Department, so titled since 1951 when 'the Information Services, the National Publicity Studios, the National Film Unit and minor components under the control of the Prime Minister's department were incorporated within the department and formed its Publicity division'.⁶⁰ This meant that the Tourist and Publicity Department now controlled the film studios

of the National Film Unit and was also home to the Government News Service, one of the 'minor components' from the Prime Minister's Department. It therefore prepared all news broadcasts. More powerful and important, the department made its own preparations for television, including dispatching the head of the film studios, Geoff Scott, around the world to investigate the medium. When asked by the Public Service Commission to make a contribution towards the costs of Scott's ensuing report, the NZBS declined.⁶¹

Boord eventually decided to accept the NZBS counter-argument to the Tourist and Publicity Department's claim, namely that television is an extension of radio. Because the proposed use of television was in broadcasting, as with radio, the NZBS, with its expertise, technical staff and national organisation, contended it was the natural department to control television. Gilbert Stringer, the NZBS official presenting the NZBS case, encapsulated the argument with his slogan that television was Radio with Pictures. Stringer had been in the NZBS since 1943. He joined as an accountant, held various administrative positions and by the late 1950s was the clear heir-apparent to be director of broadcasting. In a department in which many senior figures were so strongly in favour of radio as to regard television as an unwelcome interloper, it was Stringer who became familiar with the new medium and consistently championed its introduction. Later it was considered unappreciative to regard television as radio with pictures, but in the late 1950s it was Stringer's argument that swayed the minister.⁶² From this time Stringer led the administration of television and then of broadcasting entirely. A powerful and determined man, until his retirement in 1970 he was the dominant personality in New Zealand broadcasting.

THE START OF PERMANENT TRANSMISSIONS

Although it had been in power since 1957, Labour decided to introduce permanent television transmissions only as part of its platform for the 1960 election. Prime Minister Walter Nash made the announcement in January 1960 in London during a BBC interview: television would begin in New Zealand by the end of the year. This was in line with Labour policy as announced at the previous election, but it was clear that Nash had rushed ahead of his minister. The Opposition saw Nash as grasping 'a glorious opportunity for him to figure in the public eye' and very much catching his minister 'flatfooted'.⁶³

Nash's announcement 'shattered everybody' within the NZBS.⁶⁴ Had preparation begun in 1957, the three-year period would have allowed considerable time. For the first two years of Labour's term, however, Boord and the Cabinet discouraged rather than promoted preparation. Now, suddenly, the NZBS was required to make all haste to begin transmissions before the next election.



Ian Watkins. NZMA

Gilbert Stringer and Les Harrison were at a Commonwealth Broadcasting conference in New Delhi when they received the news, via cable from Schroder. They revised their travel arrangements and visited Australia on the way home so as to see the television developments that had taken place there.⁶⁵ Speed was all important; Nash wanted broadcasts to start as soon as possible. Lionel Sceats, the district manager at Auckland, the television starting point, considered it 'The most pressurised commencement of television transmission anywhere in the world. . . . It was thrown upon us. There was no concerted or devised planning. The time didn't allow for it. We had to get on with the job.'⁶⁶

After Nash's announcement, field surveys began to determine the most suitable site for Auckland's permanent television transmitter.⁶⁷ Although Labour's 1957 election had led to small teams within the NZBS engineering section investigating studio design, the department had not been permitted to begin field surveys.

In April 1960 the minister asked the NZBS to extend the Auckland experimental programmes 'by admitting material of an entertainment nature'.⁶⁸ With this permission the NZBS began to make arrangements with overseas organisations for the supply of entertainment material for

television.⁶⁹ On 1 June 1960 the programmes were extended to two nights a week, Mondays and Wednesdays, each of two hours. The Monday broadcasts remained as test patterns; entertainment was introduced on Wednesdays. The Monday programmes were changed to entertainment during July when Tuesday and Friday broadcasts were added and at the start of November broadcasts were increased to two and a half hours a night, Mondays to Fridays.

From 1 August 1960 the licence fee was raised to £4 a year with the announcement that it would rise to £6 10s once television was screening for 16 hours a week. That figure was reached on 1 January 1961, when weekend television began, giving a weekly total of 18 hours. The AKTV2 broadcast of 1 June 1960, the first under the new regime, was given New Zealand's first newspaper television review by John Berry writing in the *Auckland Star*. He saw the first night production, rather generously, as 'a dignified successful entry. This was a slick and thoroughly professional TV production.'⁷⁰ The night included the first live interview, of visiting ballerina Beryl Grey, by Ian Watkins. Watkins rang up a number of firsts over the coming months: he was the first continuity announcer, made the first commercial for ice cream, and directed the first musical show, *Just a Song at Twilight*. The first drama shown was *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, a 1950s British programme starring Richard Greene. It returned as a series proper in May 1961 but began with a one-off appearance on AKTV2.

BROADCASTING AMENDMENT ACT 1960

Boord originally announced, at the end of January 1960, that there would be an entirely new government department, the New Zealand Television Department, with its own head. But this changed and Labour's plans for television were revealed when it introduced the Broadcasting Amendment Bill later that year. This proposed 'the establishment of a television service to be operated by the Minister in Charge of Broadcasting in association with the existing Broadcasting Service'. A director of television was to be appointed under the same terms as the director of broadcasting, a procedure later described by Schroder as unworkable and administratively dangerous.⁷¹ Under Boord's system, both directors would be responsible directly to the minister, who would control the whole of the department, radio and television. The separate control of television was not prejudicial to the existing NZBS executives. In fact senior NZBS figures, especially Gilbert Stringer, widely regarded as 'the acknowledged departmental expert on TV', were seen as likely directors of television.⁷² The decision was a victory for the NZBS and an extension of Labour's already strong control over broadcasting.

Television was to be both commercial and non-commercial. As with radio, the non-commercial operation was referred to as a national service.

Like the X-class radio stations, television stations were to operate a commercial and a national service at different hours. There would be a separate television account within the broadcasting account and the financial arrangements for television were to mirror those for radio, with a separation between the commercial and national services. The main implication here was that, like commercial radio, commercial television would pay tax on its own profit. Its profit could not be offset against the costs of the national service and turned into a non-taxable loss within the wider television account. Television was to be operated by the state. The minister made it clear that private enterprise was excluded not just from overall control of television stations but also from the preparation of individual programmes. There was no mention of news and current affairs; the assumption was that there would be no change to the existing system.⁷³

Subsequent announcements clarified many of the details. The commercial/non-commercial mix was announced in July. Commercial television would begin in April 1961. The Auckland and any further stations would be non-commercial four nights a week and would carry advertising for the other three. Sponsorship was prohibited. Commercials would be grouped both between programmes and in breaks during programmes. Although this was one of the more obtrusive advertising methods and rested uneasily with a state-owned monopoly, it aroused little discussion and was readily adopted in New Zealand which already had more than two decades' experience of a commercial broadcasting system run as a publicly owned utility.

Labour's regard for commercial broadcasting had been shown the previous year in the Broadcasting Amendment Act of 1959 which repealed that provision of the 1936 Broadcasting Act requiring the minister to provide at least one non-commercial station in localities served by a commercial station. The Amendment Act applied only to radio stations but intensified Labour's long acceptance of commercial broadcasting and indicated no retreat from this policy as the advent of television approached.

THE HOLYOAKE MINISTRY AND BROADCASTING

Labour's preferred control of broadcasting became irrelevant from December 1960 when National won the election and Keith Holyoake became prime minister. Holyoake had made the matter of government control, 'the constitution of the authority', the 'main point of difference' in the debate on Labour's 1960 bill.⁷⁴ Labour's approach was essentially a continuation of the existing system into a television era. By opposing it so vigorously and so close to an election, National was committing itself to changing the long established administration of broadcasting.

In spite of this commitment, National's leaders were not prepared to go as far as allowing private control of broadcasting. They were men shaped by experiences of world war and the post-1945 desire for security

and stability. As Hugh Templeton, one of their successors, said, they 'wanted to relax with what they had'.⁷⁵ They did not want the changes that television brought to be extensive and were unwilling to risk a changed control of broadcasting. The National Cabinet would not follow the party's call for private enterprise.

The desire for national coverage was one strong reason for the Holyoake administration deciding against private control of television. The Interdepartmental Committee had noted that those submitting proposals for private television showed little interest in providing coverage outside the four main centres, even though everyone agreed this would eventually have to be available. R. J. Kerridge, representing the Telecasting Corporation, said this was incorrect; his organisation, at least, would go beyond the cities and was willing to open a total of nine commercial television stations.⁷⁶ But there was doubt about how committed any private broadcaster would be to national coverage. The political consensus was that this should be a priority and this was particularly so for National, with its strong support in rural areas. National's caucus committee examining television's introduction realised only a few centres would be attractive to private operators and considered it indefensible to offer a lesser service or none at all to the small centres. It therefore concluded that private enterprise involvement was inappropriate at the initial stages but that the broadcasting authority should be empowered to grant private licences later.⁷⁷

Corporation control of broadcasting had first been recommended to the National government in 1957 when Tom Shand, the postmaster-general, had asked Charles McFarlane, director-general of the P&T Department, to investigate the matter while he was visiting Australia, Canada and Britain. This trip, which included 10 weeks in Ottawa while the Canadian Royal Commission on Broadcasting was sitting, convinced McFarlane that an alternative to government department administration of broadcasting was needed and he recommended corporation control to Shand.⁷⁸ The topic came to political prominence in 1959 when the two wings of National, caucus and party, reached a compromise understanding with their advocacy of corporation control. The party, which had consistently advocated private ownership of television, altered that call at its 1959 conference to one for private enterprise running television either regionally or locally, subject to programme control by an independent corporation. The conference also made it clear that it regarded television's introduction as having been delayed far too long; one delegate pointedly stated that television had been introduced in 57 countries, including mountainous Switzerland and Sweden.⁷⁹ By the time of the debate on Labour's legislation, the National caucus had clarified its own views on the proper administration of broadcasting and also proposed corporation control as an alternative to both state control and private ownership and in the best interests of the people as a whole. It also saw a limited role for private

enterprise — in the production of programmes but not in the ownership or control of the television service.

What corporation control meant was not immediately clear. The obvious broadcasting example was the BBC, which was a state-owned utility but removed from day-to-day government control. Holyoake advocated something similar when he called for 'a television commission composed of men and women with the knowledge, the independent outlook and the judgement required for this very important task'. At first commission control and corporation control were both advocated. For some, the terms were interchangeable: 'A commission, a corporation, call it what you will,' said Holyoake.⁸⁰ The terms are different, however. The original view was that the new body would include regulatory functions and so should properly be called a commission.⁸¹ But the term corporation prevailed, accepted because the 'powers and degree of independence' intended for the new body were so extensive.⁸² Further uncertainties arose with distinguishing a corporation from private ownership. For Labour, advocacy of a corporation was 'promoting the private ownership of television'.⁸³ The National Council of Churches dropped its opposition to corporation control once it saw there was a distinction. At its conference at Ardmore in May 1959, the council repeated its 1953 view and again resolved that 'ownership and control of TV stations should be in the hands of a department of Government rather than of a public corporation'. But the following year the council told the prime minister that it now accepted TV stations 'in the hands of either a Government Department or of a public corporation'. The important point was the unanimous commitment to 'the complete exclusion of private or commercial control of television in this country'.⁸⁴ This did not necessarily mean an absence of commercial television. Commercial radio had long existed under government ownership and the Council of Churches did not speak against this; its argument was against private ownership rather than advertising on radio and television.

National was in favour of corporation control by the time of the 1960 election, though whether this applied to broadcasting generally or only to television was not clear. During the passage of Labour's 1960 legislation, Holyoake had agreed with the minister that 'television is a much more potent weapon than [radio] broadcasting'.⁸⁵ Labour proposed a separate administration for television and National's reconsideration was also only for television. Whether it would also change radio's administration remained to be seen. Holyoake appointed Arthur Kinsella minister of broadcasting. There was no rapid announcement of the new government's plans though it was understood that, rather than continuing as a government department, television at least would come under the control of a commission of three or four members, most of whom, at least, would be part-time. Assisting them would be a widely representative advisory committee. Stations would be government owned but administered by the commis-

sion. With television programmes screening seven days a week in Auckland and soon to start in Wellington and Christchurch, the government was reported as 'anxious to see the commission set up and underway'.⁸⁶

Haste was made slowly. Schroder was to have retired as director of broadcasting for the NZBS in January 1961 and been replaced by Gilbert Stringer. Schroder, however, agreed to Kinsella's request that he stay on while the government determined broadcasting's future. In the event, the period of reconsideration went on too long for Schroder, who did retire at the end of 1961 after three years as director. Stringer's appointment was unusual: he was appointed by a warrant from the minister and was regarded as occupying a caretaker post.

National's reconsideration included a caucus committee, chaired by Kinsella, which invited submissions on broadcasting and heard the last of them in May. By this stage the term corporation rather than commission was used for the new controlling body and Kinsella was in favour of it controlling both radio and television. But legislation was not prepared and Kinsella was one of various ministers who received 'hurry up' notes from J. R. Hanan, the attorney-general, who was in charge of the government's legislative programme.⁸⁷

THE EXTENSION OF TELEVISION

While the political consideration continued plans were well under way for the further extension of television. The NZBS continued until the end of March 1962. Before then television broadcasts from Auckland were extended to 28 hours a week from 1 April 1961 and further stations were opened. Christchurch television, from CHTV3, began on 1 June 1961, Wellington, WNTV1, opened on 1 July 1961, and the Dunedin station, DNTV2, was only three months from opening on 31 July 1962. Commercial television was introduced in Auckland on April Fool's Day 1961. As with the X-class radio stations, a television station was a commercial station for part of the time and non-commercial for the rest. Christchurch and Wellington introduced commercial television in October and November respectively when their hours were raised to 28 a week, as in Auckland. By the time the NZBS ended, the three stations operating were each broadcasting for 28 hours a week. Half of these hours were commercial and New Zealand television had already earned almost £400,000 from advertising sales.

The second television station to start broadcasting was in Christchurch. This was partly because the generally flat Canterbury terrain would allow immediate relatively extensive coverage of the province, but the main reason was political — so that the South Island would be seen as keeping pace with the North. Wellington was ready to begin broadcasting but the opening there was delayed so Christchurch could start first. As in Auckland,



The now demolished building on the corner of Waring Taylor and Featherston Streets that was the headquarters for the NZBC's Wellington stations, WNTV1.
EVENING POST

both the Wellington and Christchurch stations were established amidst the NZBS radio facilities, in Waring Taylor and Gloucester Streets respectively. In all three cities, the television stations, especially the studios, were built with little understanding of the requirements, which added considerably to the difficulties faced in the coming years.

Christchurch television facilities were limited. There was a telecine chain and one camera, though that was the latest technology, a Marconi mark 4. There was no videotape machinery. Any breakdown in equipment required immediate remedial work. When the telecine chain broke down, the camera was usually trained on the station goldfish tank.⁸⁸ There was only one tiny studio, and changeover from, say, a continuity to a news announcer meant one person slipping out of the chair and the next slipping in, while pulling down the blind that was the new backdrop.

The Wellington technical facilities were more adequate, particularly as they included two cameras. The studio facilities, however, were even more trying. There were two studios but the smaller had to double during the day as the office for the programme staff and every transmission night was converted into an announcer's studio. The largest radio studio in Waring Taylor Street was appointed as the main television studio. It was unsuitable on many grounds, from its size to its low ceiling to its flooring. The WNTV1 studio had been the main broadcasting studio for many years and the flooring was bowed and covered with cracked linoleum. The problems this caused became apparent only during the camera rehearsals before opening official transmissions. The uneven surface made it impossible for a

cameraman to move from a medium shot to a close-up, for example. (These were the days before zoom lenses.) So, for the first two months of transmissions, work was being done to level the floor and the main studio had to remain empty. The levelling was done, not particularly successfully, by coating the floor with a plastic substance and cameras continued to move with the tilt of the surface. The covering soon cracked — the first cracks appeared with the first judo throw shown on the sports programme — and was a continuing problem for television's entire residency in the Waring Taylor Street building.⁸⁹ The greatest difficulty with the Wellington studio, however, was that it was on the top floor, the first non-ground floor television studio the experienced Alan Morris had either seen or heard of. A total absence of storage space meant that sets had to be carted up the stairs and kept on the landing.

The Christchurch and Wellington stations had the advantage of opening with technical staff who had considerably more training than their Auckland counterparts. Many had been sent to Auckland for various periods to get operational experience and many had also undergone a year or more's training in television technique such as that offered in Wellington by Ernie Black, who became WNTV1's supervisor of operations. And both stations, like Auckland, had technical staff who were achieving a long ambition to start television transmission and were prepared to go well beyond the call of duty to make it successful. Many of the operators, like Brian Norton, speak of that time as the best in their career, 'when every member of staff without exception would do anything to get transmission on and make transmission better'.⁹⁰ Christchurch did not have a station manager or programme staff initially and technical staff were involved in all aspects of television, including such tasks as writing the copy for presentation and directing items. In all stations, those first months are remembered as glorious days in which all personnel were bonded together in a shared excitement of achievement that extended beyond the workplace. As David Kay, then with CHTV3, recalls, 'Virtually every night after transmissions we would go somewhere . . . to parties, out to coffee or something. The socialness of the group was quite marked.'⁹¹ It was not a way of life that could or should last long. The Jacks and Jills of all trades were replaced by specialists but the progress was noted with a tinge of sadness. As Norton says, 'We have become more sophisticated and skilful but I believe we have lost something.'

DUNEDIN

The fourth and final television station opened in Dunedin on 31 July 1962. The decision about the southernmost station was made within the government rather than by the NZBS. In the nineteenth century, Dunedin had been the country's biggest city but it then experienced a population

loss to the northern cities that has continued throughout the twentieth century. Even before the television station opened, Dunedin had lost its fourth position in the broadcasting finances to Hamilton. Since then, the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions have far outstripped Otago in population growth.

Whereas Dunedin was and is the smallest of the television centres, at the other end of the scale Auckland is the largest. The differences in the comparative financial performances of the four television stations were well portrayed by Stringer to his minister when accounting for the 1965/66 surplus on commercial television. The NZBC then paid overseas suppliers £150 per hour for drama and £120 per hour for documentaries and feature films. This was charged 40 per cent to Auckland, 25 per cent to Wellington and Christchurch and 10 per cent to Dunedin. Even with this apportionment, the surplus after paying for programmes came more from Auckland than the other three stations combined and Dunedin was clearly the minnow in the school. The total surplus was £494,000, of which £18,000 came from Dunedin, £99,000 from Christchurch, £92,000 from Wellington and £285,000 from Auckland.⁹² In the years since the start of television one of the recurring tensions in New Zealand broadcasting has been that of regional balance, with Dunedin trying to remain on a level with the other stations and Auckland trying to take what its broadcasters see as a rightful pre-eminence.

But the demographic and financial details were of little consequence to the political understanding that Dunedin, Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch are New Zealand's four main centres and should each have their own television stations. In the coming years, with the growing importance of television in New Zealand, the presence of the station both bolstered Dunedin's economy and strongly supported the general perception that, despite its size, Dunedin is one of the country's first four cities.

Alf Dick was appointed as Dunedin television manager though, as with the other stations, his title, at first, was station superintendent. This reflected the sensitivities and dominance of radio personnel in the NZBS. 'The hierarchy was all radio', Dick recalls, 'and they didn't like the idea of television people being called managers. Radio manager was a status. . . They didn't want to have television managers as well. It took us about two years before we were able to get this broken down and become. . . [titled] station managers.' His appointment also involved Stringer changing his original age requirements for television station managers. 'When the job in Wellington [as manager of WNTV1] came up . . . Stringer said, "Television is a young man's job. I will have no one over 45."' Dick, who was over that age, did not apply, only to see the position go to Don Donaldson, who was a year older. Remonstrating with Stringer, Dick was told, 'Well, there was no one else.' He lost his reticence and applied for the Dunedin position.⁹³

The Dunedin station was established in Garrison Hall, a less than adequate building, which two years before had been under threat of demolition in order to build a Radio House Dunedin, with future provision for television, on the site. The Dunedin television station, too, was built within the existing radio facilities which were insufficient for their original purpose, let alone for the demands of television production and transmission. As in Wellington, the Dunedin transmitter was located at the radio transmitter site. Because this was on elevated ground at Highcliff, Dunedin television, like that in the capital, began with relatively wide coverage and good reception.

The first equipment arrived in December 1961. Graeme Burrow, appointed as senior technician, maintenance, 'which made me the senior person involved in the installation of the equipment and making it go', recalls opening the cases of equipment and the difficulty of determining how to proceed. 'Various pieces of equipment, quite fundamental to the television station, we just didn't understand.' Considerable discussion and collaboration among the technicians was required. 'We had to come up as a group with a common story to tell others who came to look over the equipment.' The technicians were absorbed in the enormous task of getting the station on air. 'There were other people around but . . . if they weren't technical they were just in the way as far as I was concerned.' For Burrow and others it was difficult to determine in the first months whether stress or excitement was their main emotion. Unlike the three northern stations, which had all transmitted for some weeks before they transmitted commercials, Dunedin opened with commercial television. This added to the tension: with advertisers paying, the broadcasters felt they could not afford to make any mistakes. 'We only had one person experienced in each job. It was the fourth or fifth night before we were able to risk changing over and trying another job.'⁹⁴

THE 1961 BROADCASTING ACT

National's broadcasting legislation was introduced in October 1961 and given its final reading at the end of November. It was one of the more fiercely debated proposals of the session, particularly because it dealt with television, a new medium in New Zealand, and because the proposals differed so much from those passed by Labour only months before.

The Broadcasting Corporation Act of 1961 was a substantial 55-section piece of legislation. It required the governor-general to appoint a three-member board, including a chairman, all with a usual term of office of three years. It was the board's function 'to carry on a broadcasting service within New Zealand', previously the preserve of the minister of broadcasting. The act was the acceptance of public as opposed to state broadcasting, in which responsibility for broadcasting was removed from the government

of the day and given to the board. In each country, the nature of public broadcasting needs to be defined in practice, but in New Zealand the Holyoake administration began with a legislative statement that the previous ministerial responsibility had now passed to the board of the corporation. The only broadcasting controlled as before was shortwave broadcasting, which would be oriented to an international audience. The corporation could establish and operate shortwave stations but they would be under close government supervision. All shortwave programmes required the approval of the minister who could also require any programme to be broadcast from the shortwave stations. For the rest of broadcasting, the bulk of the corporation's work, the tenets of public broadcasting applied, with the government removed from direct involvement. This separation was never enough, however, to allow broadcasting full independence. And autonomy was reduced even during the preparation of the legislation and further eroded in subsequent years. A government could still exert its will. Effectively, the members of the corporation were appointed by the government and the corporation had to report annually to Parliament. It was also required to comply with the government's 'general policy. . . with respect to broadcasting' and 'with any general or special directions given in writing by the Minister'.

The government's major power was financial. Here its control placed in question the nature of the corporation's independence. Ironically, it was Gilbert Stringer who first argued that an independent corporation was not possible in New Zealand. Stringer, responsible for the initial drafting of the 1961 legislation, twice went to Kinsella in an attempt to change the government's plans for broadcasting. On both occasions he was told the instructions were from Cabinet and to go away and implement them. To Stringer the instructions represented an attempt to set up a state within a state that was itself too small. He considered there were two main areas of difficulty: financial independence and freedom from parliamentary influence on programming. Programming freedom was a matter faced after the NZBC was under way but financial independence became an issue while the legislation was in the drafting stages. Stringer regarded the desire for an independent corporation as financially inappropriate; in New Zealand, a small country with periodical trade depressions and cycles, the large-scale capital outlay of a national broadcaster would have to be taken into account by an organisation with a wider concern than the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC), presumably either the government or Parliament. Stringer's opinion was soon shared by the government and in the eventual legislation the corporation was specifically subject to government direction in financial matters. The corporation had to submit its programme of capital works for ministerial approval and could not allow any expenditure over £25,000 without the minister's consent. Although the corporation could borrow money, it needed the prior approval of the min-

ister of finance. These requirements, plus the fact that the NZBC income which came from the broadcasting licence fee was controlled by the government that set the level of the fee, meant that the corporation was always financially in thrall to that government.

The chief executive of the corporation, the director-general, was appointed by the governor-general, rather than the board, though on its recommendation, and had the right to attend all board meetings though not to vote. The director-general was intended to be the day-to-day controlling authority and to have considerable independence of action. The Cabinet recommended to the National caucus that the board should not act as an executive body but be 'concerned with policy making and regulatory functions only'.⁹⁵ Within the act, however, the board was superior over the director-general. The recommended split in functions, with much autonomy for the director-general, was possible but would need to be accepted and practised by whoever was appointed to the board.

A further limitation on the NZBC's independence applied to its staffing requirements and its links with the public service. Although the corporation was not part of the public service, it was not fully separate from it either. This was a major concern for many who considered the public service rules incompatible with innovative broadcasting. Selwyn Toogood, for instance, had submitted to the Interdepartmental Committee that in broadcasting and any other creative field public service staffing practices and especially promotion by seniority were undesirable.⁹⁶ Corporation members were not public servants but, though Kinsella and Stringer both advocated it, they were unable to gain independence from the Public Service Commission (PSC). The corporation's terms and conditions of employment had to be determined 'in agreement with' the commission. Kinsella regarded the phrase as a compromise and achieving it as 'the biggest argument' he had on the whole bill.⁹⁷ The power, however, remained with the PSC. The NZBC could not hire and fire staff independently and the previous public service practices continued.

The corporation was given powers that took note of the wide-ranging activities of its predecessors. Along with the right to establish and operate broadcasting stations, it could publish periodicals of benefit to its broadcasting service, do what it considered in the interests of the community to promote broadcasting talent, promote 'those arts and cultural pursuits . . . usually included in the purpose of broadcasting' and arrange concerts and entertainment, whether or not these were broadcast.

Private broadcasting was permitted under the act but was unlikely. Because the corporation had to follow the government's general policy on broadcasting, private broadcasting would require ministerial approval and therefore a change of government attitude. Also, the procedure in the act to introduce private broadcasting required the corporation to accept competition willingly. The NZBC was permitted to contract with private indi-

viduals to produce programmes that it would broadcast on its own stations. Fully private stations were allowed. The two existing private stations, 2XM and 4XD, could continue though, as ever, they could not advertise. Although new private stations, either television or radio, could be established and advertising was permitted, they did not suddenly eventuate. Applications to establish stations could be made only when called for by the NZBC and this could happen only when the corporation considered an area was 'inadequately served by existing broadcasting services'. Applications were to be heard by the corporation which, for this purpose, was deemed to be a commission of inquiry under the 1908 act. The NZBC's recommendation on any application would be forwarded to the minister, who would make a decision. So would-be private broadcasters had to wait until the NZBC judged its own service inadequate and their applications would then be heard by the organisation with which they hoped to compete. The legislation appealed to a party that had long espoused private enterprise in business generally, while assiduously observing the principle in the breach in respect of broadcasting.

2

STARTING THE NZBC

Independence was the great promise for New Zealand broadcasting offered by the 1961 legislation. In the change from government department to corporation, new practices had to be started and a new relationship established with the minister. These initial years showed that the independence offered was at best restricted, with continuing political surveillance of broadcasting's operations and development.

MINISTER, BOARD AND DIRECTOR-GENERAL

The critical relationships in the senior administration of broadcasting were those between the minister, the board and the director-general. In his initial drafting of the 1961 legislation Stringer endeavoured to model the relationships between the three on the American constitution, using a system 'of checks and balances' in which none would be excessively powerful. His aim was 'that the DG should be in charge of production . . . the chairman and the board should be in charge of policy and the minister was a liaison officer between the board and the government'.¹ This was very much an arrangement that would please the director-general, but other interpretations were possible and it remained to see what eventuated.

The three appointed to the board were Frederick John Llewellyn, chairman of the University Grants Committee, James Alexander Stenberg and Reeves Harris. Llewellyn was chairman. Appointments to the board were to be for three years though, in this first instance to prevent a complete change of the board at one time, Stenberg and Harris were appointed to one- and two-year terms respectively.² With reappointments Llewellyn was the first to go, retiring at the end of March 1965. Stenberg retired one year later and Harris at the end of March 1970. Both Stenberg and Harris were businessmen, the former in Auckland and the latter in Christchurch. Stenberg, however, was as much a figure in the arts as in business and Harris, as the son of Ambrose Reeves Harris, managing director of the Radio Broadcasting Company, had a family connection with New Zealand broadcasting. He also had personal experience, having been a member of the original 3ZB staff from 1937 to 1939. Kinsella felt the three appoint-



Gilbert Stringer in April 1962. *EVENING POST*

ments had a necessary regional spread and included 'one from the arts, one from the technical side, and an academic who had a wide field of interests'.³ Neither Llewellyn himself nor the government expected his chairmanship to be full time and he continued his position with the University Grants Committee. Throughout his term he worked largely from his university office, which was opposite Broadcasting House in Bowen Street. Since Stenberg and Harris lived outside Wellington and Llewellyn was committed to his university work, the board did not maintain day-to-day contact with NZBC affairs.

The senior NZBC employee was Gilbert Stringer, who became the inaugural director-general. The manner of his appointment was unusual. He was appointed acting director-general at the first meeting of the NZBC when it was decided to advertise the position internationally but three weeks later, at the second meeting, the recommendation was made to the governor-general that Stringer be appointed to the post for five years.⁴ Sceats, Stringer's successor, regarded the lack of advertising as a board desire 'to get on with the job'.⁵

The relationship between board and director-general was made explicit at the first board meeting. The act allowed the board to delegate such of its powers as it saw fit to the director-general and Stringer was given wide-ranging authority. He was authorised to decide the day-to-day activity of

the NZBC. He could enter into contracts, negotiate for services with other government agencies, make both policy statements and any other announcements, and 'act within his own discretion on behalf of the corporation in its relations with the government'.⁶ In essence this was an acceptance of Stringer's view but it was an uncontentious understanding shared by Llewellyn and, at least initially, by the government. The first board was notable for the chairman's strong, indeed usually unwavering, support for the director-general. Stenberg and Harris told Llewellyn's successor that they went to the monthly board meetings not with the idea of deciding policy but rather wondering what steps they should take if necessary to counter the director-general's proposals that they could be sure the chairman would accept.⁷ In these circumstances the dominant relationship for the NZBC, just as it had been in the NZBS, was that between Stringer and the minister.

The weakness in Stringer's understanding of the tripartite division of authority was the role he gave to the minister, whom he envisaged as a messenger between the corporation and the government. In fact, the minister remained the most powerful figure. Although the delegation of board powers to Stringer seemed to be a full acceptance that the director-general and his professional broadcasters were in control, in practice this did not take place. Instead, the early style of NZBC administration was similar to that of the previous government department: Kinsella, the minister over Stringer as director of broadcasting, now continued his earlier relationship with Stringer as director-general of the NZBC. It is difficult for people to change their attitudes and habits and with the move to a corporation a change of personnel would have been desirable. However momentous the reconsideration of New Zealand broadcasting, it did not disturb the continuity of succession from the NZBS to the NZBC. The other three senior appointments all went to NZBS men: J. H. Hall was appointed director of sound broadcasting, N. R. Palmer, director of television broadcasting and Lionel Sceats, director, unattached.⁸ The only new personnel were the board members who, with their delegation of power to Stringer, became less influential. It was unwise to expect the director-general's previous subservient relationship to suddenly become one of assertive independence. Schroder, Stringer's predecessor, and McFarlane, Llewellyn's successor, both regarded the advent of the NZBC as bringing little disturbance to NZBS ways.⁹

Along with ministerial financial control, the matter of parliamentary influence made Stringer fear for NZBC independence. He recognised the New Zealand political system as one with few seats in the House and a small population per electorate with easy access to their representatives. Parliamentarians had a substantial history of interference in broadcasting matters and Stringer considered that it was unrealistic to expect MPs to give the NZBC real independence.¹⁰ His concern was prescient. The first question on broadcasting matters asked in the House, about television

reception in his electorate, came from future National prime minister Robert Muldoon, in what Kinsella acknowledged was a test to determine the Speaker's attitude. Initially the question was turned aside by the minister, who argued it was no longer his province, and although the Speaker agreed, the question was still admissible. There was a substantial debate on the matter of ministerial responsibility regarding broadcasting, with members from both sides holding they had not given away their right to have their questions on broadcasting matters answered in the House. For the Speaker, Parliament was 'in a transitional stage in moving from one system of dealing with questions to another'. Kinsella accepted that though he could not *direct* the corporation to answer a question, he could *ask* it to do so. He pointed out that members had 'far more' opportunities for asking 'than existed under the old system'.¹¹ For Stringer this meant an absence of programming independence for the corporation. From this point, questions on programming and other broadcasting matters were 'answered by the director-general of broadcasting through the minister to the house as had been the case in the past'.¹²

The minister continued to answer questions in the House and also replied to the continuing stream of public letters on broadcasting matters. As in the NZBS, replies to such letters were prepared by NZBC employees for ministerial signature. Kinsella and his successor Jack Scott both maintained that this practice kept them in touch with the workings of the corporation.¹³ Stringer went so far as to argue that he would have had greater freedom as a head of a government department, answerable to a minister, than as a director-general of a corporation, answerable to a board, a minister, parliamentarians, newspapers and the general public. As a head of a government department he had the support of at least 50 per cent of MPs; as director-general of the NZBC, he had no support in Parliament from either party.¹⁴

Ministerial power over the NZBC was most obvious financially. Public and critical attention tended to focus on supposed government direction of programming, but the government's main concern and exertion of its power was over capital development. Even though much of the board's authority had been delegated to him, Stringer still needed ministerial agreement for significant NZBC plans. The strong governmental financial control was quickly added to with the directive that all development should be financed from current revenue. Three years later, in 1965, the minister reported that, to that point, the entire capital works and expansion programme had been financed out of revenue.¹⁵ During the 1960s there was just the one exception to the government's denial of borrowing facilities: in 1963 £400,000 was borrowed from the national development loans account and repaid five years later. Furthermore, the government also directed the corporation to make nationwide television coverage its first priority. These directives were major determinants for broadcasting

during the NZBC years. The corporation was not permitted to borrow and its revenue was committed to an extension of one-channel coverage that became progressively more expensive as it moved into the less populated areas of New Zealand.

COVERAGE

Stringer called his engineers 'jacks of all trades and, particularly, masters of engineering'.¹⁶ In many ways the 1960s was their decade as they not only started television broadcasting but also worked to ensure that it was available over the whole country. They were well prepared for the task. In the 1950s the engineering section had been in the forefront of an NZBS policy to send its more able juniors to university to gain tertiary qualifications.¹⁷ In the 1960s these men — they were all men in engineering — came through the ranks and the NZBC had well-qualified engineers in positions of control.

The engineers had to develop a plan whereby national coverage could be expanded outwards from the four centres. National coverage, as developed within the NZBC, meant two things: coverage of as much of the country as possible and also a system where there was one programme for the entire nation. It could originate from any of the four centres but would be transmitted from one studio centre only at any given time. The history of television in New Zealand is divided by this achievement. Local coverage and local television were to be temporary until there was full national coverage and the one programme was beamed to all viewers. In fact, the result was a recurring tension between much-loved but relatively expensive local programmes and a prevailing national counterpart.

Both Christchurch and Wellington began with 10kW ERP transmitters, 20 times the power of that in Auckland. In Christchurch, however, the transmitter was attached to the mast of the Gloucester Street building and, as in Auckland, the site was not a good one for transmission so reception was restricted. In Wellington, Mount Victoria, in the heart of the city and the site for the original 2YA transmitting aerial, was the site for the first WNTV1 transmitter. Although it did not remain as a permanent site, its elevation meant that it did offer reasonably extensive coverage. So the capital began with the best general television reception of the three stations.¹⁸

The task to find a permanent site for a transmitter in the Auckland region, replacing the 0.5kW transmitter used since the start of the experimental transmissions, was contentious. Field surveys to determine the most suitable site began in 1960.¹⁹ Broadcasting considerations were not the only ones taken into account. The senior engineers, Harrison and McDonald, favoured a city site: Mount Eden and Mount Roskill were the two most popular locations. There was considerable public reaction varying from protests that either site would be an inappropriate use of a major Auckland

attraction to borough competition to locate the transmitter in their area. The P&T Department considered either site would mean interference for its mobile radio-telephone customers.²⁰ So the NZBC's J. P. Carter, who had never favoured locating the transmitter within the city, and Harrison focused attention on what they saw as the obvious area, the Waitakere Ranges, west of Auckland. Land at Waiatarua, a commanding site 1276 feet above sea level, was chosen and purchased in 1961. Site tests of reception from Whangarei to Hamilton clearly indicated its superiority. A transmitter and what was referred to as 'a rather stumpy looking 88 ft mast' was in operation there from April 1962.²¹ The transmitting masts were not up to the towering heights of their earlier radio equivalents, but the system reflected the best of contemporary understanding. Because of the delay in deciding on a location for the Auckland transmitter, Waitarua received a more modern 5kW transmitter than those in Wellington and Christchurch. As in the southern cities, the power output was 10kW ERP.

When Dunedin television began on 31 July 1962, it was broadcast through the ex-Auckland pilot station 500W transmitter. Situated at its Highcliff site, it gave, through its aerial system, an effective radiated power of 1kW. The following year this was replaced by a 10kW ERP system and Dunedin achieved a temporary parity with the other centres.

Further extension of coverage was a matter of debate within the corporation. The engineers' plan, written by A. K. Richardson, J. P. Carter, S. E. Edwards and D. Salmon, was received by the board in August 1962 as the television coverage report. Presented and argued for by Harrison, the director of engineering, the plan was known as the 'big six' because the engineers wanted a further increase in power of the main centre transmitters, plus two more transmitters. This would mean six high-powered transmitters at strategic sites along the length of the country, making a television signal generally available. The main transmitters would be 100kW ERP, 10 times the power of the existing transmitters in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. The sites had to be commanding and the transmitters powerful enough to cover the whole of the territory out to the radio horizon, some 10 to 15 per cent beyond the visual horizon. This obviated the need for extra transmitters and, importantly, lessened the number of channels required. The few channels available were subject to intense competition from other would-be users, especially the P&T Department. The plan also anticipated a future introduction of colour television and the provision of a second television channel, both of which were incorporated in the design of the transmitters. This was a sensible provision and economical in the long run but it added to the immediate cost. Harrison estimated a total cost for establishing a one-channel coverage at £3.149 million and for two-channel coverage at £4.368 million.

Because the plan was an immediately expensive option which delayed the extension of coverage into rural areas, Stringer and the board

demurred. They doubted the corporation had the capital to proceed with the plan. The immediate need, they felt, was to increase income and this could best be achieved by leaving the main centres as they were and, instead, spreading rapidly into rural areas with small, relatively inexpensive repeater units.²² Harrison prevailed and at its September 1962 meeting the board accepted the report. A major reason for his success was the support given to the engineers' plan by the minister. Kinsella, who himself claimed technical expertise in the area, did not like the alternative plan of many small transmitters on the grounds of their likely mutual interference. Instead he favoured having fewer and larger state-of-the-art transmitters. That this was both more expensive and meant slower coverage did not worry Kinsella. The extra cost would be offset by transmitter durability and, for economic reasons, the minister was also keen to slow the momentum to spread television. The main effect of television's introduction on the New Zealand economy was an increase in the manufacture and sale of receiving sets and Kinsella did not want what he saw as a disproportionate consumer expenditure on these. In this he was strongly supported by New Zealand manufacturers who wanted coverage completion to be slow so they would not face an initial spurt of television set buying but no continuing market. The aim was to slow coverage so that it was completed when the first sets were due to be replaced.²³ Manufacturers of other types of goods wanted consumers with funds to buy their products.

This was a major decision for the NZBC and, along with the earlier political decision in favour of full national coverage, defined its allocation of resources for the 1960s. By adopting the plan the NZBC accepted that the bulk of its revenue for the coming years would go to television rather than radio and, within television, would be used to extend coverage rather than to provide programming.

The original television coverage plan was to have the six major transmitters linked to five medium-power transmitters at Whangarei, New Plymouth, Napier-Hastings, Waimate and Invercargill and 10 low-power transmitters at Kaitaia, Rotorua-Whakatane, Taupo, Gisborne, Masterton, Nelson, Westport, Greymouth, Kaikoura and Central Otago. Extended by a network of further translators, the signal could be transmitted to all cities, towns and significant settlements. In practice, the 'big six' were not enough and over the decade they became the 'big seven' as Hedgehope in Southland was added to the list of main transmitters.²⁴ Transmitters and translators were to be 'linked by co-axial line, direct re-broadcast or microwave link'.²⁵ Of the three, it was microwave linking equipment that was at the heart of the coverage plan. It was also used to relay programmes to the transmitters from the respective studios. Microwave technology's importance for communications is its ability to send signals in a tight beam from one site to another. Although not applicable to the eventual broadcasting of a signal, it is of great use in sending a signal on its journey to a

broadcasting transmitter. Microwave technology can link studios with transmitters and send programmes over long distances through a series of transmitters. NZBC engineers devised a plan whereby the major transmitters along the length of New Zealand were linked by microwave, thus allowing a single programme to originate from any of the television studios. Each transmitter could act as a site for the reception and dispatch of microwave signals and as a broadcaster to individual television receiving sets. But although six major transmitters could send signals up and down the country, they would not be sufficient to send the signals to all receiving sets. Television signals only go along a line of sight. To provide signals to all receiving sets, the main transmitters needed to be augmented by the series of smaller transmitters beaming into areas shaded from the main transmitters and by some hundreds of mini-translators to ensure that all homes received an adequate signal. These final steps brought the financial implications of the plan into stark relief. Gaining coverage for the final and most isolated sections of the population was enormously more expensive per household than in the urban areas.

The microwave plan brought the corporation into dispute with the P&T Department. Long the sole custodian of New Zealand telecommunications, the department was strongly resistant to losing its monopoly. During the 1950s P&T's ascendancy had been clear when it had installed a main trunk coaxial cable telecommunication system which, with the agreement of the broadcasting service, had been set up with television transmission in mind. But the change to the 625-line television system rendered the P&T line inadequate for television transmission and the battle was renewed as the NZBC attempted to gain its own complete transmission system. Unlike the P&T Department, which linked urban areas, the NZBC needed links to its transmitters which were predominantly on isolated sites. Furthermore, it would be much cheaper for its own engineers, who would be regularly visiting the transmitter sites, to service the ancillary equipment rather than have P&T engineers make special and more costly trips to do the work. The NZBC also argued it would be better for the country to have alternative communication systems in case one was removed by accident or disaster. Also opposing the NZBC was the Treasury which did not support expenditure on two telecommunication systems.

Also important to the NZBC was the advice it received from many overseas broadcasters to keep, if at all possible, its transmission system out of P&T control.²⁶ Although the New Zealand experience was merely one example among many countries of competition among government and private agencies for ownership and control of telecommunications, there was perhaps a special intensity because the P&T engineers were just as frustrated as their broadcasting counterparts. At stake was the prestige of the engineers of the two organisations.²⁷ Both had suffered from a government reluctance to spend and the P&T Department was particularly keen

to control what little money was permitted. The dispute also involved considerable amounts of money. Carter estimated full control of transmission by the P&T Department would have required the NZBC to pay some \$3m to \$4m annually. Scott, Kinsella's successor, saw the P&T Department/Treasury view as logical and the NZBC received full ministerial support only when Lance Adams-Schneider followed Scott. The NZBC succeeded in getting its own system and, quite apart from the engineers, much credit for the achievement rests with Stringer's considerable political and administrative skills. The continuing competition, however, was a further complication slowing the 1960s extension of coverage.

The seven major transmission sites are, from the north, Waiatarua, Te Aroha, Wharite, Kaukau, the Sugarloaf, Highcliffs and Hedgehope. At the time the plan was accepted two of these sites, Waiatarua and Highcliff, were already determined and in operation, though not with their final full-strength transmitters. The meeting where Harrison's proposal was finally accepted also decided to go ahead with the next three. Permanent sites were to be determined for the Waikato-Bay of Plenty and the Manawatu and Canterbury areas. The Manawatu site was 'probably Wharite' and, to accompany it, a translator was to be installed at Masterton to link the Wellington signal with the Manawatu site, as well as itself providing a signal for the Wairarapa. Wharite, which was chosen, overlooks Palmerston North, only 13 miles away. Also it was relatively easy to develop as, at the time, it was already roaded to within three-quarters of a mile of the summit, with a bush track along the final section.

In the Waikato there was no obvious best site and trade-offs were necessary. There were four possibilities: Te Aroha and Ngatamahinerua on the Kaimai Ranges and Pirongia and Maungatautari in the Waikato proper. Either Pirongia or Maungatautari would have served Hamilton well but the Kaimai sites promised coverage of both the Waikato and the Bay of Plenty. Of these, Ngatamahinerua, the more southern, was the better for transmission to Rotorua while Te Aroha was the better for Hamilton. Te Aroha with an altitude of 3126 feet, was chosen. It was the most difficult of the sites to develop and provided considerable challenges just to install roading for access. Te Aroha was the NZBC's first helicopter site: to install the pilot station, more than 20 tons of equipment were lifted in 89 flights. Because weather conditions atop Te Aroha meant that only about four months in a year were suitable for on-site construction, several buildings were prefabricated; full on-site construction would have taken two years.²⁸ The permanent station could not be built until road access was completed. The difficulties were worthwhile, however, for Te Aroha holds a commanding position and eventually delivered a competent signal to the Waikato and the Bay of Plenty.

In Canterbury the Port Hills, separating Christchurch from Lyttelton and Banks Peninsula, offered a number of acceptable transmitter sites for

unimpeded transmission over the Canterbury Plains. From these the Sugarloaf was chosen since it was the best site for the necessary linking to both Dunedin and Wellington. But of all the transmitters, the Sugarloaf most dramatically illustrates the difficulties of line of sight broadcasting. Although it transmitted strongly and evenly over the vast plains, Lyttelton, Sumner, Redcliffs and other local settlements close to the transmitter, but shaded in the valleys of the Port Hills, experienced low-quality reception and required further smaller translators.

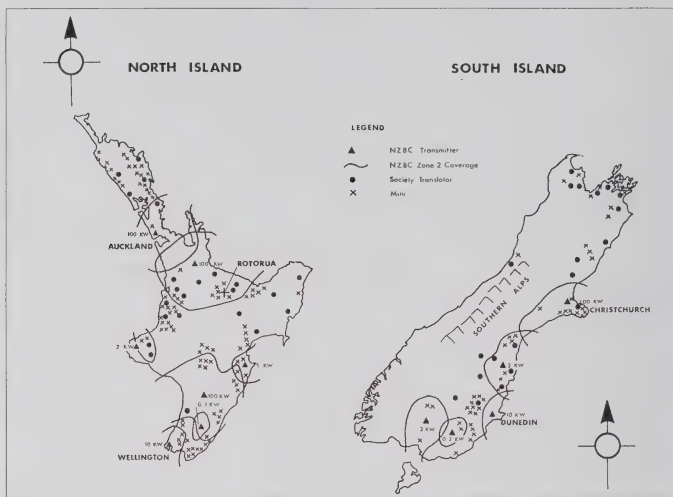
In Wellington, Mount Victoria was never regarded as a permanent transmission site because it was not high enough to serve adequately the Tawa Flat-Plimmerton and Marlborough regions. And high-gain aerials could not be used there without interfering with the Wellington airport landing clearances. Kaukau, above Khandallah, was chosen. It did not have these disadvantages and the linking requirements to Christchurch particularly favoured Kaukau. This was a major consideration for the initial link in this connection, that from Kaukau to Blue Duck in the Kaikouras, covers a 90-mile distance, at its inauguration the longest microwave link in the world.

The 1962 coverage proposal was put forward as a seven-year plan but that timing was always dependent on the finance available. Interim 1kW ERP signals were started at Te Aroha and Wharite in 1964. In the same year the most southern of the main transmitters was sited on the Hedgehope mountains so as to provide a signal for Southland. Hedgehope opened with a 1.5kW ERP power. In 1965 this was doubled and the first three 100kW ERP transmitters began operation at Waiatarua, Te Aroha and the Sugarloaf. Wharite received its 100kW ERP output in 1966 and Kaukau in 1967. Hedgehope was increased to 20kW ERP in 1968, 50kW ERP in 1969 and 100kW ERP in 1971. In that year Highcliff was raised to 50kW ERP, thus completing the high-power transmitter coverage.

THE TRANSLATOR SOCIETIES

The NZBC's plan to start with high-powered main centre transmitters rather than moving immediately into country areas did not please rural people, who wanted access to television as much as their urban counterparts. As a result, a large number of translator societies came into being in the mid-1960s. These were private non-profit organisations that acquired low-powered translators and installed them in their districts well in advance of the corporation's timetable so the NZBC signal could be fed to individual receiving sets.

In their coverage report the NZBC engineers had argued against the use of temporary translators on the grounds that they would risk the overall plan, because they used frequencies 'required for more important areas' and because, once the first was accepted, it would be politically impossible



Stringer's 1965 map showing corporation and private transmitters.
AADL, W3363, NA

to limit their number or remove them from service when necessary. But, despite his own wish to delay coverage, Kinsella received the greatest pressure from would-be translator societies.²⁹ As a member of a governing party with a strong rural base, he could not resist this and the NZBC board, too, saw little sense in going against the tide of rural opinion. It also accepted the private translators because they served its own desire to accelerate the extension of television coverage.

The first of the translator societies was the Rotorua television promotion association. Its principals, along with the two local MPs, met Llewellyn in August 1962 and requested a licence for a translator to relay the AKTV2 signal to their district. The principals were Graham Bryce, who ran a taxi business in Kawerau and who, in World War II, had worked in England as a technician on the development of radar and its associated installations, and Dennis Cobbe. The two had forced a decision from the NZBC two months previously, simply by setting up a 1.5W translator to relay the programmes of the 10kW AKTV2 transmitter.³⁰ The two men were the pioneers of private translator activity and influential in its development in many other areas.³¹

The board saw the Rotorua proposal as a model of organisational procedure that could be followed in many areas. It sent an NZBC technical

team into the area to determine appropriate sites and requested Stringer to check urgently the availability of low-powered repeater units costing no more than £800 each.³²

The NZBC decided that it would allow and assist non-profit-making viewers' societies of not less than 50 members and registered under the Incorporated Societies Act to install, operate and maintain translators on its behalf. Peak output was limited to 25W. The members would meet the capital costs of purchase and installation and the corporation would subsidise operation and maintenance costs. In practice, during the few years of translator society activity these decisions needed to be modified. The requirement for a minimum of 50 members was relaxed once the larger areas of fringe reception were catered for and interest moved to 'pockets', small confined districts often containing only a few households, where nearby terrain destroyed any possibility of reasonable reception. Also, the offer to subsidise operation and maintenance costs often had to be increased because many societies could not convince all benefiting viewers to join the local association.³³ In many cases the corporation paid all expenses.

With the decision made to license and support translator societies, the next step was to 'go forth into the field and convince them they had to submit to a certain amount of Post Office and broadcasting inspection and control'.³⁴ This was not always easy and Carter recalls various tense meetings with members of translator societies. There were particular problems when translators on the same channel were not shielded from each other and mutual interference resulted. This difficulty was widespread but was especially notable in the relatively flat Manawatu area during 1963 and 1964 where there were 16 separate television translators.

But overall the societies were of great benefit to the NZBC and considerably enhanced its early income. In 1965 Stringer acknowledged that 90,000 of the then 415,000 receiving licences paid for were attributable to the spread of private translator equipment. At £6 10s a licence fee it was a significant addition to NZBC funds.³⁵ The societies reached their high point during 1966 when, throughout the country, there were 50 separate licences for stations over 1W ERP. But this number does not reflect the extent of the private activity for, in addition to the societies, there were a further 280 small translators, operated mainly by private individuals, that brought television reception to other localities, sometimes to single houses.³⁶ Certainly the translator societies brought television reception to their communities long before the NZBC scheduling. The Wairoa association, for instance, discussed with NZBC officials in 1964 the reception timetabling for their area and learnt they could be waiting five years. Their translator was installed and working in time for the 1964 Olympic Games broadcasts.³⁷

As its coverage increased, the NZBC purchased the societies' assets and closed down their operations, replacing them with signals from the corpo-

ration's own translators. In many cases there were problems at this point, particularly in Gisborne and on the West Coast, where the changes required local reception to be altered to another originating station. The Gisborne society's translator took its signal from the Te Aroha transmitter and so received the Auckland programme. But in terms of signal strength and economics it was sensible to come up from the south and the translator was replaced by an area coverage station at Whakapunake, which gave the Wellington programme. Similarly, on the West Coast a signal from Christchurch was replaced by one originating from Wellington. The Hokitika and district society had taken advantage of defraction, the phenomenon where, in their case, the tops of prominent mountains in the Southern Alps act as lenses and transmit a signal from the Sugarloaf in Canterbury to various positions along the Coast. Very large aerials were erected in reception positions along the beachfront with a translator service relayed from there. It was an innovative and remarkable system but in the long run it was cheaper and more reliable to develop a microwave and off-air system from Wellington down through the Nelson province.

In October 1969 the transmitters and linking programme were advanced enough to allow a full networking so from that month the four originating stations were joined and a full national programme was offered. The programme could originate from any of the four and be shown simultaneously over the entire country.

When the NZBC began there were 23,343 television receiving sets licensed. In 1971, when the corporation completed its 1962 coverage plan, that number had grown to 664,440. The NZBC estimated its transmitters covered 93 per cent of the population with private transmitters lifting that to 'a total coverage, with varying degrees of signal quality, to 99% of the population'.³⁸ This does not mean that that percentage of the population purchased a television set, but set ownership grew along with the coverage growth. New Zealanders continued their habit of adopting new technology avidly. By late 1965 more than 50 per cent of households had a television licence; in 1971 that had increased to 80 per cent.

GETTING STARTED

A 24-year-old, interviewed in the *Listener* in 1960, said, 'Of course, I've the usual complaints about the world: the noise, the politicians, the bomb, the endless confusion of good, and Oh God, here comes television.'³⁹ Many regarded television with similar apprehension, but most accepted it with delight. In the early months crowds could regularly be found outside television retailers' premises, gazing through the shop windows at the blue flickering screens, fascinated by this new medium. The first purchasers of sets found that their neighbourhood popularity reached a new high as friends dropped in to watch the evening programmes. With an inexperi-

enced staff mistakes were inevitable, but the NZBC was transmitting to an audience quite unused to television and so happily satisfied with whatever was offered. As Julie Cunningham, one of the Christchurch announcers, noted, 'It was all so very new and it didn't matter what you did, people found it entertaining. . . . If you made mistakes they enjoyed that also.'⁴⁰ Standards rose later, as both broadcasters and audience became more discerning, but the initial reaction for most was indiscriminate delight.

Each local community displayed inordinate interest in its television personalities. Continuity announcers such as AKTV2's Alma Johnson, WNTV1's Relda Familton, CHTV3's Julie Cunningham and DNTV2's Cathy Dowling became well-known identities held in enormous public regard. When Johnson started on AKTV2 in August 1960, she was warned by Ian Watkins that she would be off screen in six months as she would be over-exposed by then. The opposite occurred: Johnson was a television personality for over a decade. Rather than boring their audiences, the announcers became appreciated as constant companions. John Blumsky, one of the early Canterbury announcers, recalls, 'We were very conscious the moment we stepped outside the studio that we were pretty important in town . . . you became common property.' Like most, Blumsky regarded the visual nature of television and its home-based reception as responsible. 'When you appear on that screen in the lounge and they are in their own domestic circumstances with their own people around them then you are touchable and become touchable.'⁴¹ Julie Cunningham felt that 'People wanted to know all about you . . . [and] felt very much that you belonged to them. They didn't feel at all reticent about coming up to you as if you were an old friend.'⁴²

The public had been interested in, and had even idolised, broadcasting personalities since the advent of radio but television heightened this attitude. Before television transmissions began Sceats had urged the staff in Auckland to realise and accept that 'the pebbles we had thrown at us in sound broadcasting would be absolutely nothing alongside the stones and the rocks which would be hurled at us in television'.⁴³ For television fronts-people in particular, the public attention was intense. John Blumsky from DNTV4 noted, 'Everything that the television people did was very very closely inspected and what they didn't know they made up about you.' To cope with it, the staff at first 'stuck together very closely. . . . We drank together. We socialised together. It was a self-protective . . . circle.'⁴⁴ The private lives of television personalities became the subject of gossip and rumour, which was especially difficult for women. 'The tales are legion throughout the country of some of the appalling things that have been said about women on television.' Some found the cost more expensive than the rewards of their new occupations. Mary Dick, who worked at CHTV3 from 1964 to 1972, going from continuity announcing to reporting for *The South Tonight*, 'gave up television because I got extremely neu-

rotic about being recognised everywhere I went. . . . We had a terrible run of rumours go on about us. It just got worse and worse.’ These, though, were negative aspects of the new relationship between television broadcasters and the audience. On the positive side television broadcasters became ‘friends of the family’, people with whom the viewers considered they had a lasting and friendly relationship.⁴⁵

PROGRAMMING

The choice of television programmes was very much influenced by Stringer who was as directive as any of his NZBS predecessors. Even after the 1966 reconstituted board began exerting more authority over the director-general, this never extended to programme selection, a matter the NZBC’s second chairman regarded as a ‘great disappointment’. Stringer staunchly maintained that programming was his concern and this approach continued beyond his term to become the major and lasting example of a division of responsibilities between the board and the executive. Generally, for all programming since the days of government department status, no board has had more than a post-transmission power to approve or disapprove.

Stringer had firm views on programme selection. He stated that he was an Edwardian and considered himself ‘very conservative’. He had a paternalistic attitude and felt New Zealand needed to be led gradually into television fare. Programmes that were acceptable in Auckland, where television was first introduced, were not acceptable in Dunedin, where television was a later arrival. Many programmes he deemed totally unacceptable and some, *The Untouchables*, for example, were not purchased and screened until after his retirement. Stringer regarded himself as always in conflict with Hugh Greene, the BBC director-general during the 1960s, who believed that the BBC had a duty ‘to be ahead of public opinion rather than always to wait upon it’.⁴⁶ Greene’s view might be correct for Britain, but Stringer did not consider it proper for the NZBC to lead public taste. Its role was to reflect. Only in comparatively minor cases — Stringer used the example of one item in an orchestral concert — would it be acceptable to broadcast material unfamiliar to the audience.⁴⁷ Initially Stringer, often his wife as well, and head office officials Tahu Shankland and Alf Dick, would watch the programmes on offer. ‘We sat there for hours at night,’ said Stringer and he would make the final decision whether to buy the programmes sampled. Dick and Shankland saw themselves as without any special qualifications but as average New Zealanders selecting programmes for their fellow viewers. ‘We have got to have certain categories such as drama, westerns and documentaries’, they reasoned. ‘The thing was to select the best we could out of those categories.’⁴⁸ Although Stringer did not continue as a regular programme selector, his influence remained dominant. He stopped only when he was sure his staff knew what he would and

would not 'put up with'. Even after he ceased being a regular previewer, Shankland's and Dick's programme reports were recommendations; Stringer made the final decision. When Dick moved to head the Dunedin television station, a more formal programme assessment committee was formed, again making recommendations to Stringer.

Stringer was also strongly influential in the NZBC emphasis on imported programming. The previous NZBS disdain for American radio programmes was not repeated with television. Stringer sought a balance between American and British programming but was not concerned at the overall heavy reliance on materials from these two countries; this had been signalled by the Interdepartmental Committee.⁴⁹ As Kevan Moore has noted, such an emphasis merely continued the NZBS radio practice where the task was to play imported records rather than produce local programmes. New Zealand's broadcasting experience was in scheduling rather than production.⁵⁰ Unable to borrow and required to commit its resources to the extension of television coverage, the NZBC was in no position to produce anything like the majority of its programming so it had to be purchased from elsewhere. Within these demands, however, the cost structure for buying programmes was so financially advantageous that an initial need became a long-term reliance on imported programming.

The NZBS had a long experience of purchasing radio programmes from various countries and this flowed into the NZBC. The corporation was also in a powerful bargaining position because it was the only purchaser in New Zealand. The already cordial relationship with the BBC was also reflected in the new medium: BBC television programmes were made available to the NZBC at a price of £100 per hour and £50 per half-hour. Stringer succeeded in getting the various American suppliers to accept the same pricing structure, even though it was considerably below their normal rates. Generally the suppliers had cleared their expenses in the United States and were not dependent on overseas sales which were, as Dick noted, 'the icing on the cake'. NBC was the first American supplier to accept Stringer's terms; he was shrewd enough, too, to insist that the price was to include the cost of a new print, some £12 10s at the time. The other suppliers then accepted the same terms. The arrangement that all programmes were purchased at the same standard price of £100 per hour was to hold until New Zealand had 100,000 television licences, at which stage the price would be renegotiated.⁵¹ With a cheap, long-term supply of television programmes from Britain and the United States, the major producers of English-language programming, New Zealand joined an international audience where the same programmes were watched in many countries. The western series, *Bonanza*, typified the new situation. For most of the 1960s, and until production stopped in 1973, it was one of the highest rating programmes not just in New Zealand but internationally. Although many nations depended on material bought from the United

States in particular, New Zealand was unusual in the sheer extent of its imported programming.

NEW ZEALAND PROGRAMMING

Indigenous programming was scarce on New Zealand television. In the final week of January 1964, to take a typical example, there were the usual news and sports programmes made by the NZBC. These always made up the lion's share of New Zealand programming and that week, with an All Black tour of Britain in progress, the sport content was higher than usual. In addition, on Tuesday evening, AKTV2 screened a 12-minute film called *Safe Arrival*, showing how the ordinary motorist could have an accident-free holiday, and, on Sunday, a 10-minute religious programme called *Epilogue*. WNTV1 had *Hawaiian Cocktail* on Tuesday, a 15-minute documentary about a family who visited New Zealand, a 10-minute Mozart recital on Friday and *Epilogue* on Sunday. CHTV3 fared best that week with *Do It Yourself* on Wednesday, 18 minutes on finishing and french polishing a small bookcase. *Safe Arrival* screened on Friday, as did the final episode of the Dunedin-produced *Music Hall*. Sunday featured a 10-minute programme entitled *The Protecting Arm (Part iv) Stop Thief*, a 20-minute Lieder recital and *Epilogue*. DNTV2 had the Lieder recital on Monday and, on Sunday, *Safe Arrival*, *Epilogue* and a 10-minute *Sunday Special*, which was another religious programme. In all, other than news and sport, there was a total of three and a half hours of local content, if you count each programme each time it was screened. On any one station there was considerably less — from 22 minutes on AKTV2 to 100 minutes on CHTV3.

Local production was inhibited by the large disparity between the costs of imported programmes and those made at home. By putting its resources into coverage extension, the NZBC had little to spend on staff or equipment. Under the circumstances, the speed with which staff were regarded as competent or at least useable was understandable but still astounding. Graeme Burrow was selected to attend a five-week television training course in Auckland and, on the third day, operated a camera for a live transmission of a ballet programme. Recalling the event in 1985 he said, 'Nowadays you would be a fully trained cameraman with eighteen months experience at least before you would get into a live ballet programme.'⁵² It was a far cry from his early NZBS experience when, four weeks into his first appointment, he was finally allowed to take one of the panels off the side of the 4YA transmitter and dust inside it with a paint brush. The general lack of NZBC equipment, especially cameras, meant the corporation was hard-pressed to produce its own programmes. Most of its early filming, particularly that done outside a studio, was done by NFU cameramen. For local filming, the corporation also contracted various stringers, non-

NZBC personnel employed by the day to do a particular job. The Kennards in Christchurch were two such stringers; their first job, soon after CHTV3 went to air, was to film a rugby league match. But, as so often happened, the inexperience of the technicians ruined the results of this initial effort. The Kennards filmed the event on negative film but the station technicians, unaware of the correct procedure for transmitting it, were unable to get pictures or sound to air. The learning curve was climbed, however, and the Kennards did much work, particularly news filming, for CHTV3. Payment was three guineas a day plus their expenses for purchasing and processing film. Film expenses were tightly controlled and the Kennards operated under the rule of thumb that they were expected to get three items on 100 feet of film.⁵³

The NZBC bought an unusually high number of imported programmes but very few local ones. It would employ such stringers as the Kennards but was not willing to take a further step and purchase complete New Zealand-made programmes from independent producers. This was permitted under the act but the corporation never considered it until asked by the minister in 1966 during the advent of Radio Hauraki. Instead the NZBC began to regard itself as a monopoly broadcaster responsible for both programme production and transmission. There was no financial incentive to buy locally when the low purchase price for imported programmes could not be duplicated at home. The NZBC considered it could produce New Zealand programmes as cheaply as anyone else and, far from recognising a duty to assist independent local producers, who could flourish only with corporation blessing, it believed local production should, as far as possible, be confined to its own ranks.

The one activity to which this logic did not apply was the production of the commercials, generally 30 seconds long, which peppered the programmes. This was regarded as an inappropriate use of public broadcasting facilities and advertisements were purchased from elsewhere. So New Zealand independent houses could exist and earn a living from producing commercials, but found it very difficult to move beyond these confines. One result of this was that the only non-corporation voices the New Zealand broadcasting audience regularly received were those featured in advertisements.

Not prepared to work with local independent producers and unable to afford to make expensive drama programmes, the NZBC concentrated on news, sport and light entertainment.

SPORTS

Sport broadcasting, both reporting and event commentaries, had been among the most popular features on NZBS radio and the same emphasis continued into the NZBC years. The new corporation's sports section was

headed by Lance Cross and its first-year highlights were the broadcasts from the Commonwealth Games in Perth to which New Zealand sent its largest team to date. Closer to home, radio commentaries continued to cover the various traditional sports. These were joined by new activities. In the early 1960s, especially, the public was riveted by the radio commentaries of the various attempts to swim Cook Strait, which culminated in the successful 1962 crossing by Barrie Davenport.

In the last months of the NZBS, 2YA began 24-hour transmissions, from 2 October 1961. This greatly increased sports coverage by allowing live commentaries of many overseas events. Major events in other countries, from FA Cup finals to world title boxing bouts, were broadcast, as were the matches of New Zealand representatives. New Zealanders adopted what became a national habit of getting up in the middle of the night to follow the fortunes of their sporting heroes overseas. The networking of the national programme in 1964 was followed in December the next year by a networking of sports commentaries as *Sports Roundup*, which was broadcast on the four YC stations. This was a major advance for radio sport but, especially during the summer cricket season, led to anguished complaints from established YC listeners upset at the increased encroachment on the broadcasting of classical music. The YC stations also broadcast from Parliament and this, too, ate into classical repertoire time.

The advent of television did not lead immediately to televised sport. This requires coverage outside the studio which the early NZBC, bereft of equipment, could not manage. It was not until its second year that the first events could be covered live and then only in Wellington and Christchurch, the first centres to get the camera vans that were the corporation's outside broadcasting equipment. Auckland was to have been first but its van was destroyed in a fire on the Aotea Wharf. Cross and his team were all radio personnel with no television experience and the little they could cover contained more than its share of 1960s television gaucheries. The 'splendid ineptitude'⁵⁴ was generally not judged harshly, however, being seen as part of the careless charm of early television. More importantly, the start of television brought a repeat of the sports troubles of the 1930s, with the administrators of rugby and horse racing, the country's major sports, once again refusing to allow live broadcasts, fearing a drop in attendance. Other sports, especially rugby league, soccer and hockey, seized the opportunity to raise their profiles and readily accepted live televising. But the decade saw little appreciable change either in the New Zealand public's definition of its favourite sports or in the rugby and racing administrators' attitudes. The New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU) was particularly at odds with the NZBC, at first requiring that any televising of matches be delayed until after 7pm so that match attendance would be unaffected and so that the players would have enough time to get home and see themselves on television. This stipulation was

revised to after 5pm but the edict against live telecasts remained. The only exception to this in the 1960s was the various mid-week fixtures between secondary school sides.

Televised sport also caused problems inside the NZBC, particularly in the relationship between programme producers and the senior members of the sports section. Like other areas of broadcasting, sport was treated as an integrated unit with staff serving both radio and television. This led to increasing friction as television producers found themselves not only without the usual decision-making authority over the programmes for which they were ostensibly responsible, but also required to follow the directions of their radio-oriented superiors. The difficulties continued during the 1960s and, as elsewhere in the NZBC, were sorted out only when distinct hierarchies were made for the separate media. In the case of sport, the issue was resolved only when television-oriented Des Monaghan, fresh from current affairs production, was appointed as sports producer at the end of the decade.

The televising of sports first brought to the fore new problems the corporation was to have with advertisers. In televising public events the NZBC was faced with advertising billboards designed and placed to be filmed by its cameras. In July 1963 Noel Palmer, director of television, discussed with the NZBC solicitor, B. L. Darby, the appearance of billboards at regular venues for television outside broadcasts. Rugby league was played and filmed at the Wellington Showgrounds where 'two large and obviously new advertisements (one for Rothmans which is somewhat painful to us) have been erected facing the TV camera positions'. Darby felt little could be done immediately and suggested that Palmer 'endeavour to reduce the effectiveness of the advertising signs by controlling camera work even if it means some limitation of presentation'.⁵⁵ This advice could not be followed for long and the longer-term solution was to enter into agreements with advertisers and officials at the grounds regarding permissible billboarding. The 1963 incident was an initial indication that the mere presence of cameras affected the events that were to be filmed and introduced new competition as advertisers grasped the publicity opportunities made possible by television.

LOCAL PROGRAMMES

Lack of equipment and poor studios made local television production difficult. On the other hand, the considerable reservoir of talent in New Zealand could overcome such difficulties to produce programmes well regarded by the audience. One notable example of this was shown on the first night of official transmission in Auckland with the appearance of the Howard Morrison Quartet. Already well known as New Zealand entertainers, the four singers were elevated to national stardom by their televi-



Ray Columbus. NZMA

sion performances. They became stalwarts in television light entertainment and their leader, Howard Morrison, entered a long television career which included his winning the Best Television Entertainer award in 1983. Others showed an equal ability to master the exacting requirements of early television production. *Time Out for Talent*, South Island television's first entertainment show, was highly demanding of both production staff and performers. The state of the equipment in the Gloucester Street studios meant that each item had to be recorded in its entirety; one mistake meant starting all over. The show gave considerable experience to those involved and was also a vehicle for two entertainers who grew to be among the country's most popular music stars. One was the show's co-host, Dianne Jacobs, then aged 15, who later changed her name to Dinah Lee. The other was Ray Columbus, who appeared with the Invaders. They were already an established combination but *Time Out For Talent* gave them national recognition, which was extended a few months later when Columbus hosted a television series of his own.

Dunedin's *Music Hall* series attempted to overcome the size limitations of the Garrison Hall studio by cutting inches off the set's tables and chairs



Les Andrews compering *Personality Squares*.

to make the studio seem larger. Although the inability to shorten the players added an Alice in Wonderland touch to the series, it was a great success and the first major hit for the Dunedin studios.

Local television production benefited greatly from the close association with radio and that medium's long linkage with New Zealand entertainment generally. A fine example is Auckland's Les Andrews. A man who had been a member of World War II's Kiwi Concert Party and who sang as a tenor soloist in concert performances with the National Orchestra, Andrews joined the NZBS in 1958 as a radio announcer. Over the next 21 years he announced on all the corporation's Auckland stations and also on AKTV2. Among other programmes, he hosted the 1ZB children's request session for 12 years. He sang regularly on both radio and television. On television he was one of a panel of singers on *Play It By Ear*, hosted the song programme, *Heart and Soul*, compered *Tinker Tailor* and *Personality Squares*, made guest appearances on many other programmes and was available and competently able to step into the breach during any broadcasting emergency.

A younger and later example of versatile competence is Max Cryer. Also a fine singer, he began his broadcasting career in the 1960s, showed ability on both radio and television and soon became one of the stalwarts of light entertainment. A panellist on many programmes, and a compere on others, he was also able to venture successfully into comedy: his duets

as ventriloquist and dummy with Ray Columbus are among the classics of New Zealand television. Some programmes such as the children's *Do Re Max* and the evening's *Town Cryer* were built around his talents. He was judged Entertainer of the Year in 1974 and also had considerable success behind the camera as a producer. He remains a popular broadcaster and was a regular performer on Brian Edwards's Saturday *Top o' the Morning* programme on National Radio, where he answered queries from listeners on topics ranging from the historical to the linguistic. The remarkable versatility shown by such broadcasters as Andrews and Cryer was indicative of the wide-ranging competence the corporation found among its staff and contracted entertainers. Light entertainment was the richer for their able willingness to perform a varied repertoire.

Many others were found who, while not having the versatility of Andrews and Cryer, showed an extraordinary specialised ability within television entertainment. The best example of this in the early days of New Zealand television was Graham Kerr, an Air Force catering officer, who first appeared on television in the programme, *On Our Doorstep*, where he demonstrated cooking an omelette. His own programme, *Thyme for Cookery*, followed and what would be a national and then international television career for the man soon known as the Galloping Gourmet was under way. Kerr showed that well-presented cooking programmes were highly popular with the New Zealand audience. He was the first in a sequence of talented men and women who combined the skills of the chef with those of the presenter. New cooking styles were as much part of a changing world as television itself, and New Zealand's television chefs blessed the country's cuisine as much as its television screens.

Quiz shows were also soon started — Max Cryer was New Zealand's first television quizmaster — and were enjoyed as much on screen as on radio. The most popular of the early television quiz shows was *Note for Note*, started in 1963 and compered by John Daley. Contestants were given three opening notes and had to guess the tune. People from the audience were featured but the show's main interest came from its celebrity contestants, visiting musicians such as Acker Bilk and Kenny Ball and New Zealand personalities such as Kiri Te Kanawa and Lee Grant. Over the coming years a plethora of quiz shows were screened, with their finest hour occurring 20 years later when, in 1982, *Mastermind International* was made in New Zealand, produced by Max Cryer and fronted by Peter Sinclair.

Documentary production was a difficult area that was not approached initially with enthusiasm or confidence. The lead, however, was given by Shirley Maddock in Auckland, who stands as a good example of the NZBC employees who readied themselves for television. Originally a radio person, she had some television experience in England in the 1950s. Returning to New Zealand where television had still not started, she then went to the



The New Zealand World Quiz team in 1968. From left, Ralph Dearnley, contestant, Graeme Ross, producer, Jim Winchester, contestant, Lyell Boyes, scorer. BILL BEAVIS

United States for further television experience. When she came back to New Zealand in 1959, she was sent to Auckland to join AKTV2. Wednesday night was the night for local programming: Ian Watkins hosted an interview programme called *On Our Doorstep*, on which Maddock did interviews, and she also appeared in a number of arts programmes in the *Looking at Auckland* series. When a television news service started in Auckland, Maddock was the scriptwriter. The news was performed live with the announcer watching the screen and reading the script to the pictures. Captions were superimposed live during transmissions.

It was not until the station had been broadcasting for two years that staff felt able to venture from the studio. When Maddock was sent to Devonport to film an item on a local arts festival, her course in New Zealand television was clear. 'I will be out in the fresh air and start to put New Zealand on screen for New Zealanders to look at . . . it was time that we reflected our landscape, our culture and our people.' This decision was a splendid move for Maddock and for New Zealand television since it meant the introduction of television documentary. Her first documentary, *Islands of the Gulf*, dealing with the Hauraki Gulf, was a learning experience for all involved. Financial accountability was amateur. Maddock says, 'I always used to ask for more money than I thought it would cost . . . because you always got into terrible trouble if you exceeded your budget

. . . if they agreed to the extra amount instead of one programme perhaps you might have enough for two.' The budget was aided by the considerable assistance Maddock and her crew received from the Auckland boating fraternity. She learnt to be 'completely shameless about asking people to do things for nothing', and also found that 'people found it enormously amusing and entertaining to be allowed to take part'. This was not the least of the reasons that *Islands of the Gulf*, envisaged originally as a single programme, ended as a series of five half-hour programmes, the first of which was shown on AKTV2 on Sunday, 13 September 1964. These were the days before camera crews were employed by the NZBC; Maddock worked with Don Whyte and Harry Reynolds, who became the camera team for all her documentaries. Sound work was another matter. That had long been part of the radio-oriented NZBS and NZBC. One of the corporation's sound technicians, Wahanui Wynyard, joined the team and made the soundtracks for this and Maddock's other documentaries.

The success of the series was much greater than expected, going far beyond a local Auckland appeal. As Maddock says, it was 'the first time in television in New Zealand that we had really looked at ourselves and it had the most tremendous impact'. The series was popular all over the country and was followed by a book of the same title, authored by Maddock, which was also a considerable success. Maddock had shown the way for many documentary-makers. New Zealanders were eager to use the medium as a way of learning about their own country. Maddock herself produced further documentaries; perhaps her most significant work was *The Distant Shore*, a production about the Gallipoli campaign, filmed with the same crew, narrated by Sydney Musgrove and directed by Ian Watkins.

Maddock's career also revealed the different treatment a female employee received in the NZBC and in New Zealand in the 1960s. She was not above using 'a certain amount of feminine guile' and, during the celebration of the centenary of the capital shifting from Auckland to Wellington, gained permission from the prime minister and the leader of the Opposition for the first use of television cameras in the House: 'By the simple expedient of telling one side that the other had agreed they both did'. She then found that the only women permitted entry were those few who had been elected as MPs, so she had to direct her crew, all male, from the press gallery. Added to this, her crew, from the NFU, 'were very anti-women. . . . I had to do a very good job before they would even accept me as second rate'. These attitudes could and did change with time, but Maddock's television career ended when 'I got married and had three children'. She has since enjoyed success as an author but television production was no longer for her. 'I found I had to bow out of television. It is far more demanding of time than any other sort of creative activity.'⁵⁶

In the 1960s, Kevan Moore became the corporation's premier light entertainment producer. He was another of those New Zealanders who

had readied themselves for employment in television. He joined the NZBS in 1955 straight from school as a radio technical trainee but even then his attention was on television. His friend, the writer Douglas Cresswell, had suggested that Moore 'should get into radio because there is this new thing called television coming along'. He worked in radio in Christchurch, Greymouth and Invercargill, receiving the broad training characteristic of the NZBS. In Moore's case this included learning to be an announcer, a necessary skill for technicians in Greymouth who were often required to begin daily transmissions by reading the weather forecast. He moved to Sydney in search of television employment but started there also in radio. Many wanted employment in television and New Zealanders 'were low on the pecking order'. His broad radio training, however, gave him an advantage: the Australians were 'programme officers or announcers or panel operators or technicians [whereas] we tended to have a smattering of the lot'. Moore found employment with Channel 9 in Sydney, working in the outside broadcast area, which required people who could fix equipment on location as well as operate it. He returned to New Zealand when the NZBC began and started with Auckland television.

In 1963 Moore produced *Let's Go*, a half-hour popular music programme that screened on Saturday nights. He remained with it as producer for the next two years. Although not his first production, it was the first he called 'distinctly my own'. Unlike previous musical programmes, which concentrated on established, middle of the road artists, *Let's Go* emphasised young performers and allowed them a greater freedom to perform new music in their own styles. It was the first New Zealand television programme to become part of the 1960s fusion of popular music, fashion and style that began in England and was epitomised by The Beatles and the clothing revolution of Carnaby Street. The programme host was Peter Sinclair, who had been a WNTV1 newsreader until he started a daily radio pop music show, which led to his hosting of *Let's Go*. It was the first of many collaborations between Moore and Sinclair. Although neither was 'totally in sympathy with the music and the styles', they realised their popularity, excitement and social importance. The show became extremely popular and changed the nature of New Zealand musical entertainment. For Moore, the light entertainment side of television was 'the only area that it was possible to be creative in at the time'. In a country unused to open expression of opinion, it was the only broadcasting sector free of the heavy hand of censorship: 'people did not take entertainment seriously so therefore it was safe'.⁵⁷

THE INTRODUCTION OF NZBC JOURNALISM

The major 'unsafe' area was undoubtedly news. Although there had always been news broadcasts on radio, since 1937 they had been prepared outside

the NZBS, at first in the prime minister's office and then within the Tourist and Publicity Department. The NZBS read but did not write the news. Because successive governments wished to retain control of broadcasting news, the service was never located at the NZBS; it remained under political control and was often politically motivated. Furthermore, it lacked regular access to non-governmental news, national or international. The two directors of broadcasting in the 1950s, William Yates and John Schroder, strongly supported by J. H. Hall, the Supervisor of Talks and an ex-journalist, recognised the problems and attempted to address them. As former newspaper journalists, both Schroder and Hall felt keenly the lack of journalism in the NZBS. They wanted to start a news service within the NZBS and have access to the same news sources as newspapers by becoming a member of the New Zealand Press Association (NZPA). In 1950 Frederick Doidge, Minister of Broadcasting in the first Holland ministry, gave permission for an application to be made to join the NZPA. This was the first of various applications in the 1950s; the last was made by Raymond Boord, broadcasting minister in the second Labour government.⁵⁸ Although there was always some support within the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, it was never enough to change the status quo. All the applications were rejected by a press association that saw no reason to increase the journalistic prowess of a competitor. Even if an application had succeeded, the NZBS would still have faced the daunting task of convincing the government to move responsibility for news preparation from the Department of Tourism and Publicity to the NZBS. Schroder has spoken of repeatedly 'begging' the governments of the 1950s for the right to start a news service.⁵⁹

The situation did not mean a total absence of journalism from the NZBS. The most notable instance, and the major NZBS contribution to journalism in the 1950s, was the radio reporting of the train disaster at Tangiwai. Because the derailment happened on Christmas Eve 1953, a Thursday, and no newspapers were due for publication until the following Monday, it was only via radio that the country could learn what had happened. Lionel Sceats, a later director-general, was the NZBS person who attended what he termed the 'dastardly spectacle' and was mainly responsible for its reporting. He regarded this episode as the unheralded and unrecognised birthday of news broadcasting.⁶⁰

This, however, was exceptional. The NZBS's inability to control its news bulletins continued through the 1950s and was shown particularly by its silence on the major controversy of 1960: whether the All Black rugby tour of South Africa should go ahead while Maori were refused the right to be selected. Pressure from Walter Nash, Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs, and from the Ministry of External Affairs, led to an almost total failure to report and discuss the controversy.⁶¹ There was one significant exception, the reporting of an anti-tour demonstration at Victoria

University that indicated the NZBS could evade the government censorship occasionally but did not alter the overall state control of news and current affairs broadcasting.

The need to obtain political permission to start a news service disappeared with the introduction of the NZBC: the corporation itself could decide on the future nature of its news service. As Stringer noted, 'It did not need the approval of the government of the day. Whatever pressures the press magnates had on the National government of the time, as it would appear they had in the past, did not apply.' Without permission to join the NZPA, any broadcasting news service had to have sufficient staff spread around the country to form the basis of its own news association. For Gilbert Stringer, this difficulty was overcome in the 1950s with the opening of the X-class stations. There were gaps — centres such as Taupo, Blenheim, Tokoroa and Taumarunui were not covered by the broadcasting service — but Stringer believed it was possible to challenge the NZPA: 'We had the makings of a very good PA of our own'. Stringer said later that he decided, while the 1961 Broadcasting Act was being drafted, there would be no further applications by the broadcasting service for NZPA membership. At the time, Stringer was an employee of the NZBS and not yet even a director-general designate, so in theory he was in no position to decide. In practice, though, he was a pivotal administrator and did much to shape the future of broadcasting news and current affairs. When it was clear the NZBC would be instituted, Stringer instructed J. H. Hall to prepare a submission for the formation of a news service within broadcasting. This was presented to the corporation at its second meeting, held on 2 April 1962, the day after the 1961 Broadcasting Act came into effect. Board members were presented with the ending of the government news service, the history of the rejections from the NZPA, plans to begin an NZBC news service and the assurance from Stringer, now the acting director-general, that the job could be done. It was a *fait accompli* and the board resolved 'to proceed with the establishment of a news service in sound broadcasting and television'.⁶²

This decision brought 'a mood of elation' generally to broadcasting employees.⁶³ They had long felt the inadequacy of the existing news service but had been powerless to change it. And the decision was momentous, not just for the NZBC, but for the NZPA and also for New Zealand. The previous broadcasting news service had been an arm of government to which the traditional journalistic duties of reporting and discussing did not apply, but the NZPA was itself a stultified organisation. Started in 1880 as a co-operative of newspaper proprietors, the association functioned well as a news source but also ensured that newspapers faced competition only among themselves.⁶⁴ In the twentieth century, with the rise of Labour and National, the New Zealand newspapers, with few exceptions, became National Party supporters. This political partiality was symptomatic of a

wider and shared cultural conservatism. The decision by the NZBC to start its own news service meant the permanent establishment of an alternative journalism in New Zealand. Although it was not, like the infrequent Labour supporting dailies, inherently opposed to the established newspapers, it introduced another aspect of public broadcasting previously unheard in New Zealand. The country now had competing news voices and this led to great changes in the understanding of journalism and in the practice of the craft within both the NZBC and the member newspapers of the NZPA.

In practice, Stringer's judgement of the capabilities of the corporation was much too optimistic. The first years of news preparation and presentation within the NZBC were ones of considerable learning, with inexperience and even incompetence to the fore. This, however, is not to criticise Stringer. Keeping faith with his predecessors, he seized the first opportunity to begin the practice of journalism within New Zealand broadcasting since the assumption of government control of radio in 1936. Without his assertive confidence that the job could be done, the moment might have been lost in a reconsideration of the decision to start a distinct news service. Stringer occupied the pivotal position at a critical moment and his contribution was of enduring importance to his country.

EARLY NEWSROOM

R. E. (Ben) Coury, appointed as inaugural news editor at the beginning of 1961, spent his first year with the NZBS unable to do more than merely maintain the 9pm news bulletins, but he was ready to develop an expanded service once the NZBC began.⁶⁵ Coury, at one stage press secretary for Walter Nash, came from the Tourist and Publicity Department, where he had been responsible for the preparation of the nightly news bulletins for broadcasting. His appointment was not the first choice. The job originally went to an ex-editor of the *Dominion* but Coury successfully appealed against the appointment under the rule that an applicant from within the public service who could fill a position was to be preferred over an external candidate.

The NZBS news programmes taken over by the NZBC were a single daily radio bulletin prepared within the Tourist and Publicity Department and broadcast at 9pm, a television news bulletin that began in March 1962 and was read to camera by a newsreader in each station after the weather forecast at 7pm, and a filmed television news programme at 8pm. As they had been since the 1930s, the spoken bulletins were predominantly information from government departments to which was added international material taken largely from the BBC. The bulletins had always suffered from a lack of non-governmental New Zealand news, which could be obtained only from material published in the newspapers. The main 9pm

radio bulletin was continued when the NZBC began but with a new journalistic emphasis. This change began during the final months of the NZBS when, for the first time, Opposition politicians' points of view were quoted along with government statements. This had to be done with considerable circumspection for fear of arousing government antagonism and jeopardising an independent news service.⁶⁶

The filmed television news programme, *NZBS* (later *NZBC*) *Newsreel*, began on the Auckland station in July 1960. It was broadcast at 8pm and was also programmed on the other stations when they started transmissions. From April 1961 the newsreel was moved to 7pm. At first it consisted entirely of overseas film purchased from the London-based BCINA, the British Commonwealth International Newsfilm Agency; colloquially known as Visnews, BCINA later assumed that as its formal title. Under the agreement with BCINA made by the NZBS in 1960, news film was purchased at an initial annual cost of £2,200. This sum was based on there being 20,000 television sets in operation and rose over the years in proportion to the growth in television licences.⁶⁷ Soon the *Newsreel* began to include local topical films. In March 1962 the programme was returned to 8pm and continued to be a mixture of BCINA and local news films. Now, however, the stations were sharing their local films. Each day each station would send copies of the local news film shown the previous night to the two other stations for them to show the next night.

Coury's first task was to ensure an adequate supply of both national and international news. Locked out of the NZPA, the NZBC had to find its own information. The NZBC shortwave receiving station at Quartz Hill became the international source. The station was located just below the summit of Quartz Hill, a mile or more south of Makara Radio, the shortwave station owned and operated by the P&T Department. Quartz Hill had been commissioned in 1944, following the initial establishment in 1939 of a smaller station at Titahi Bay, mainly to receive and rebroadcast BBC news, the main source of overseas information for the public during World War II.⁶⁸ Along with the BBC the station monitored the Voice of America (VOA), Radio Australia and other shortwave stations. The news staff chose their bulletins from this material. It was one person's sole task to maintain contact with Quartz Hill, decide what bulletins were wanted and arrange to have them recorded and transcribed.⁶⁹

Because, when the NZBC began, there were 604,922 radio licences on issue as opposed to 23,343 television licences,⁷⁰ the news service was initially principally a radio one. New Zealand needed a national news staff. Coury began with a group of indeterminate size for, though attempts had been made during 1961 to build up a news staff, this was in defiance of a Treasury view that this was an unnecessary addition to a country well supplied with newspapers. Consequently the first staff were disguised as copywriters or were officially on the staff of another government department.

When the NZBC began the news service, numbers soon grew to 25 as staff were appointed in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. This, however, did not give a national coverage and the news net was extended into the rest of New Zealand by gradually associating news staff with all the radio stations around the country. In August 1962 news staff numbers were raised to 36 when permission was given to hire a further 11 journalists, all to be stationed in provincial radio stations. Invercargill was the first, says Coury, when its local news stringer, Gil Norman, an eventual editor of news, joined the station there. At the other end of the country, in Whangarei, the station manager, Alex McDowell, was effectively a radio journalist. He was not trained as such but, said Coury, had 'an ear for news'. He sent local news items by telephone which 'sometimes made the national news'.⁷¹

Along with two unattended repeater stations in Northland, seven further radio stations were started in the first five years of the NZBC, an increase that Stringer acknowledged was made particularly to allow the extension of the news net.⁷² The new stations were 3ZA Greymouth and 2ZE Blenheim in 1964, 1ZA Taupo and 2ZH Hawera in 1965, 1ZO Tokoroa, 1ZU Taumarunui and 1YX Whangarei in 1966. With this growth, and with the recruitment of journalists to the existing stations the news staff built up steadily. 'It seemed no time at all we had 80 on the staff,' said Coury, 'and it went over the 100.'⁷³ The numbers had risen to 140 in 1974 when the disbanding of the NZBC was being planned.⁷⁴ Most of the recruits came from a newspaper or press agency background in journalism. The September 1964 opening of the National Programme network on radio meant a change in position for many staff, some of whom became journalists.

At the beginning, the newsrooms in the four main centres were separate, a matter of some surprise to the ex-newspaper journalists who wondered if their broadcasting superiors had heard of the teleprinter, well established among the New Zealand press.⁷⁵ A teleprinter network began to be installed in June 1962, primarily for the news service. Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin were linked immediately but the extension to other centres was slow. Nelson and New Plymouth, for instance, did not join until November 1970.⁷⁶ Before this, the various bulletins were largely prepared locally, although there was some co-ordination by telephone. Once the four main centre newsrooms were linked, the capital became the chief news centre, supplying Wellington material from local items to parliamentary news and also acting as a clearing house for the other cities. All centres sent all their material to Wellington where editorial decisions were made about what material would be forwarded to the various radio and television stations.

Initially there was little distinction between the radio and television news bulletins: the newsreader simply sat in front of a camera and read the

bulletin. The *NZBC Newsreel* was different, being film oriented, but its staff were separate within the corporation and not under Coury's editorship. Again, once the four television stations were on the air, Wellington became the news centre and a clearing house for WNTV1 and the other three stations. The BCINA films were usually flown in to Wellington three times a week, scripted and put to air on the WNTV1 bulletin. Next morning, copies of the items, with scripts altered to allow for the fact that they were now two and often three days old, were couriered to Christchurch, Dunedin and Auckland and shown on that night's bulletins. Although the BCINA news sources were adequate, the selection of items was made in London and was beyond New Zealand control. As David Edmunds notes, 'We really had no chance to select what we wanted. We got what they thought we wanted which tended to be as they would see the Commonwealth through British eyes. They sent us a lot of the Queen doing fairly minor things. We would get a lot from other Commonwealth countries. . . . We didn't get stories like Commonmarket stories, we didn't get very many stories from Eastern Europe, from the Soviet Union. We tended to get nice comfortable picture stories.' Eventually this became a growing irritation but initially it was accepted happily. Because the newsreel compilers were not part of the news staff, there was little concern with the style of journalism. As Edmunds says, 'I never regarded myself as a journalist in those days. I was a film scriptwriter.'⁷⁷

Television networking facilities were not available for most of the 1960s and, in their absence, filmed domestic television news, as distinct from the announcer-read news bulletins, started separately in the four stations. As with the preparation of the BCINA-supplied bulletins, this development was simultaneous with but separate from the news staff growth. Graham Wear, the initial bulletin editor, referred to it as 'a news magazine' capacity rather than a news group. Each station would make a member of their television staff responsible for getting local television film. Edmunds, speaking in 1985, described it as 'a local reporter out shooting really local stories, things that were just of interest to the local area, new buildings being opened, new cars on display, that sort of item, not the hard gritty news we have nowadays'.⁷⁸ Part of this was an inability to do anything else so that stations were forced towards a magazine style. At times the limitations were overcome. One of the more notable instances took place in the final month of the NZBS when Derek Wright, an NFU cameraman, used a chartered Cessna to film the capture of the stolen schooner *Kotiti* by the Navy launch *Olphert*. The film, edited and videotaped, was on WNTV1 two and a half hours later and on CHTV3 and AKTV2 that same evening.⁷⁹ But this was an exception.

It was very difficult to be topical. Cameras were just not available for news staff or for outside work generally; a stringer cameraman had to be found and hired. Generally film could not be processed immediately and so

could not be screened on the day it was taken. In its early stages the NZBC was hugely indebted to outside people and agencies. Stringers such as Harry Reynolds in Auckland and the Kennards in Christchurch were vital and, in Wellington, the reliance on the NFU effectively acknowledged the strength of the unit's earlier, unsuccessful bid to control television in New Zealand. The NFU was responsible for most of the early Wellington outside broadcasts and film was processed at the NFU laboratories in Miramar, on the other side of town from the broadcasting studios.

Added to the technical difficulties was a lack of understanding of journalism and, in particular, of investigative reporting — seeking out stories that had not broken elsewhere. Edmunds, speaking of the filmed television news, notes that the main influence was the cinema newsreels: 'We were looking for pretty pictures. We didn't delve very deep.' Maurice Smyth, a foundation member of the NZBC news staff, acknowledges the lack of experience was general through the news section — 'We were finding and feeling our way' — but also argues that, 'We were endeavouring to reflect the way New Zealand was at that time. Don't forget we are going back to times when you didn't lock your car, you didn't snip your windows, you didn't necessarily take your key out of your front door.'⁸⁰

The number of news bulletins was expanded considerably in the opening year of the NZBC. In the first month a daily bulletin was introduced on the commercial radio stations at 6.15pm and a late news and weather bulletin introduced at closedown on the television stations. On 9 July 1962 Coury established the first regular midday bulletin, though only on the national stations. Breakfast and further evening bulletins began on 6 August 1962, again on the national stations. Four months later, the number of radio news bulletins was increased to 11 a day on the commercial stations and 12 on the YA stations. These were half-hourly during the breakfast and lunch sessions and every two hours in the evenings. The 9pm YA bulletin remained the main daily radio news bulletin but the 1962 changes exploited radio's immediacy for the first time. Bulletin times have been changed over the years but have remained a constant presence ever since.

These bulletins of the early and mid-1960s were not networked but sent by telephone or teleprinter to the various stations and read separately. It was the same with parts of television news bulletins: 'reader items' were prepared in Wellington and read by the various announcers. Film items were airfreighted to the four television stations, playing in Wellington, usually, on the first night and in the other cities over the next one or two days. Coury acknowledged the inadequacies but was 'defeated by the logistics'.

Although those preparing the *NZBC Newsreel* and the local filmed television news items were not part of Coury's staff, a liaison gradually developed between them and the news staff and everyone was brought under



Philip Sherry, announcer and news reader, in the rather shabby 2YA studio at 38 The Terrace, 1963. GODFREY GRAY

Coury's overall control in September 1963. At this stage, too, the timing of the television news bulletins were changed. A headline news and weather bulletin was introduced at 6pm, when transmissions started. The nightly main news bulletin, with weather and sports news, ran from 7.30 to 8pm and there was a final late news and weather bulletin at closedown time.

Within Coury's organisation there were separate editorial staff for the two media but for the journalists there was no division between radio and television: they prepared items for both media. Radio news broadcasts were prepared in Wellington and read from each station. The television news broadcasts were the same bulletins read to camera from each station, followed by 10 to 15 minutes of film originating both locally and overseas.

Lionel Sceats, Stringer's successor as director-general, said of his broadcasting years, 'The changes . . . were more extensive after the advent of the news service than ever before.' These changes were not easily adjusted to. When B. L. Darby, the corporation solicitor, was asked for a legal opinion on the use of cameras at court cases, he replied, 'It would be wise if the Corporation did not televise photographs of persons awaiting trial before they are convicted and the time for appeal has expired.'⁸¹ Legally proper though this opinion was, it indicated an opposition within the corporation to many of the activities of modern journalism. In spite of Stringer's



Broadcasting House pictured in 1971. ROB SILLIS

enthusiasm for the news service, the NZBC began with no tradition of journalism and, among its higher officials, little understanding of it. Further, Coury's successful appeal meant that the initial editor had no experience or training in editorial judgement. The majority of news staff were young, newly recruited both to the corporation and broadcasting journalism, and the largest group of employees not to have come from the NZBS. It was a difficult combination and the board soon recognised the news service as its major problem area.

The audience, too, needed to adjust to broadcasting journalism. Some found it hard to accept. In 1963, during the Profumo affair, Coury reported a considerable number of complaints from listeners at the use of 'prostitute' in the bulletins, a word not fit to be aired 'in front of children at the breakfast table'.⁸² Coury's reply that he was copying the BBC bulletins did little to help: it was the growth and the nature of New Zealand bulletins that increased the presence of the outside world and worried some of the audience. Such complaints were not, however, the majority reaction. The WNTV1 newsroom also reported viewers ringing to check whether there was any Profumo affair news on that night's bulletin; if not they would go to the cinema.⁸³ The more widespread public reception of broadcasting news, both in radio and television, was enthusiastic. The corporation's early efforts can be described as naive and barely competent, but they were accepted by an audience that more than matched its broadcasters' lack of sophistication and lack of appreciation of what broadcasting journalism should be. New Zealanders are a highly literate and educated



Relda Familton at work in Broadcasting House, 1964. GODFREY GRAY

people, and news conscious, as is attested by the country's very high rates of newspaper reading. Yet their experience of broadcasting news had been restricted to the very limited government news service. Eager for a proper broadcasting news, they took to it with enthusiasm and appreciation. Unusual on an international comparison, the nightly main television news bulletin immediately became the most watched programme and retained its ascendancy over the coming years.

BROADCASTING HOUSE

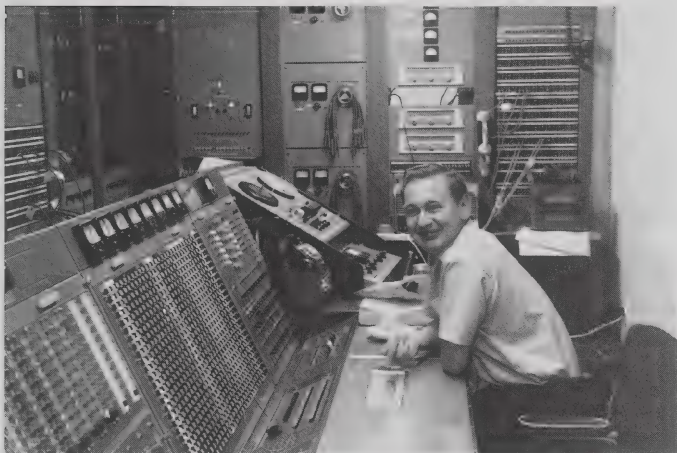
The very good news of 1963 for the NZBC was the opening of Broadcasting House, first planned in the 1930s. Tenders were called for late in 1960 and the building was opened by the governor-general, Sir Bernard Fergusson, on 16 September 1963. The modernist structure was a far cry from the grand edifice originally envisaged by Sir James Shelley — even the *Listener* acknowledged it as 'an unpretentious rectangular block' — but its site, on Bowen Street immediately behind Parliament, made it centrally convenient and its size, with an inner core of reinforced concrete giving 24,000 square feet of space, meant that, for the first time in Wellington's radio history, all the city's radio stations and accompanying support were housed in one place. 2YA, 2YC, 2ZB, 2YD and the shortwave service all had their separate studios and there was room for the NZBC news section too.



Peter Sinclair at work in Broadcasting House, 1964. GODFREY GRAY

Unpretentious though the building might look, it was innovative acoustically, the matter of paramount importance for broadcasting studios. The ventilation equipment was state-of-the-art and almost silent. Even more important acoustically was the multiple hyperbolic paraboloid roof, an aesthetic solution to the problem of getting open space within the inner core. It sat on the four walls of the core, needing no supporting columns which would have transmitted external sounds. All studios had cork floors and walls and ceilings isolated from the main core. The *Listener* described them as airtight shells 'floating' in the building. The electronics were also advanced with the manufacturer, the Tokyo Shibaura Electric Company, better known under its trade name of Toshiba, claiming a first for Broadcasting House as the most fully transistorised broadcasting centre in the world.⁸⁴

Because they were both now in Broadcasting House, the commercial and non-commercial radio stations were brought closer than ever before in their history. A similar joint accommodation took place in Auckland when the non-commercial radio personnel left their Shortland Street accommodation to join their commercial associates in Durham Street. Their previously bitter rivalry lost much of its rancour as personnel mingled on a day-to-day basis. The commercial stations were still pre-eminent in terms of their audience size and, because of the income they generated, non-commercial programmers were told that this supremacy was not to be challenged. From this point until the late 1970s, when competition for



Frank Ledger in the master control room, Broadcasting House. GODFREY GRAY

rapidly dwindling resources arose, the two types of radio co-existed and co-operated.⁸⁵

Even as Broadcasting House was completed it was too small to accommodate all of broadcasting's endeavours. WNTV1 in particular was not based in the new building, which was a radio rather than a full broadcasting centre. This meant particular difficulties for the television news personnel who were housed in Broadcasting House while the WNTV1 studio was in Waring Taylor Street. Every night, shortly before the television news was broadcast, Wellingtonians could witness a desperate cavalcade as all involved jumped into cars with their films, scripts, captions and other equipment for the ride to the studio.⁸⁶

KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

The assassination of United States president, J. F. Kennedy, was a major test for the fledgling news service. Kennedy was shot at 6.25am New Zealand time on 23 November 1963, with the first news coming in at 6.56am in a BBC special bulletin, followed by a further announcement from VOA in its 7am bulletin. The New Zealand public first heard of the shooting from the NZBC's 7.15am regular commercial network bulletin, followed by the national stations at 7.30am. The president's death was first announced in New Zealand on the 8am BBC bulletin. In the following hours and days the radio newscasts offered a thorough coverage of events,

culminating in a direct three-hour broadcast from 2YA of the full funeral and burial ceremony. The coverage brought numerous congratulations, with one listener writing that news coverage generally had 'made seven league strides in coverage, accuracy and presentation since its inception'.⁸⁷

Television stations, of course, had the same information as the radio, but their news bulletins indicated New Zealand's isolation and the difficulties the NZBC faced in rapidly obtaining pictures, either moving or still, of overseas news events. Graham Wear, then the assistant editor of television news, had all day to prepare visual support for the evening television news bulletin and, although it was quite impossible to get film of the events to New Zealand, he managed to secure the first electronically transmitted overseas news photos transmitted for a New Zealand television bulletin. The ABC in Sydney agreed to send copies of still photos they received from the United States and these were transmitted courtesy of the Post Office, which had an overseas radio photo service and a link between Auckland and Wellington. Thus still photos were available for the WNTV1 and AKTV2 bulletins, though not for CHTV3 and DNTV2. In television's defence, Coury pointed out that at least two of the wire photos had not reached the New Zealand afternoon papers, but the pictorial coverage was scant and generally less than that available in the press.

For Stringer, the entire Kennedy coverage showed convincingly the corporation's 'competence and maturity'. His senior staff, however, were less self-congratulatory. In spite of radio's success, Sceats was unhappy with the reaction speed. He felt that, since the news of the shooting had been picked up at 6.56am, it should have been broadcast sooner than 19 minutes later on the commercial stations and 34 minutes later on the national stations. He was also unhappy that, whereas confirmation of the president's death was confirmed by VOA at 7.35am and the BBC at 7.40am, it was not broadcast in New Zealand until 8am and then only in a BBC bulletin. Accordingly, he made arrangements for any future 'authentic news of exceptional magnitude' to be broadcast in immediate news flashes. Sceats's radio complaints were quibbles compared with the performance of television. Coury lamented the lack of wire photo equipment in Christchurch and Dunedin and argued to his director-general 'that the sooner we were permitted to buy an overseas radio photo service for television, the better it would be for the prestige of the corporation'. In the previous months most New Zealand newspapers, in an obvious attempt to compete with television news, had established their own supply of radio pictures and had forged ahead of television in immediacy.⁸⁸

The assassination coverage, particularly that on television, raised doubts which had already surfaced concerning NZBC journalism generally. Stringer's readiness to hire news staff was not matched by a willingness to spend on the other accoutrements of broadcasting journalism and there was only a slowly growing awareness of inadequacies that needed to be

identified and addressed. The news service was discussed at length in the board meetings of February and March 1963, at which, unusually, not only board members and Stringer but many of the senior officials were present. But it was a year before a first step for improvement was taken when Stringer, at the start of 1964, arranged for James Kemp, a BBC news editor, to come to New Zealand and survey the NZBC news service.⁸⁹

ELECTION BROADCASTING

Further doubts about the ability of the NZBC surfaced with its first major political test, the coverage of the 1963 election. Corporation policy on broadcast election addresses was considered at the board meeting in November 1962. John Marshall, the deputy prime minister, attended and Stringer presented a paper outlining the NZBS past practice and the policy adopted by other Commonwealth broadcasting organisations. The most innovative recent change was the BBC's series of 40-minute regional election television broadcasts during the 1959 British election campaign in which the public were able to question party spokesmen. But nothing similar had yet been tried in Canada or Australia and the NZBC would not follow suit either. It was decided that free broadcasting time would be offered to election candidates only (a total of 24 hours on radio over the main national stations and two hours on each of the four television stations), that all television speeches would be recorded in advance in five- or 10-minute units and that the allocation of the free broadcasting time would be determined by the prime minister in consultation with the political parties contesting the election. The pre-recording of television speeches was to overcome the lack of network facilities and allow simultaneous broadcasting over the four stations.⁹⁰

With this decision the power was handed to the prime minister of the day to decide which parties should share the free time. (Time could not be purchased for broadcast election addresses.) Holyoake assigned himself, Marshall and Arthur Kinsella as his party's representatives and invited Arnold Nordmeyer, leader of the Opposition, to nominate three Labour representatives to meet with them. Nordmeyer assigned himself, Hugh Watt and Henry May. The lion's share of the time, naturally, was given to National and Labour. Each received 50 minutes of television time and nine and a half hours, spread over 24 occasions, of radio time. Social Credit, with no representatives in Parliament, received 25 minutes of television time and five hours, spread over 12 occasions, of radio time. Before the election the television time was increased by 20 minutes, shared by the three parties. Other parties received nothing. The Communist Party, which made repeated requests, was refused outright and the Liberal Party was told it would receive no free broadcasting time until its candidates 'had demonstrated at a general election that they have some support'.⁹¹

Within National, at least, all MPs were tested by the party's publicity director to assess their television and radio abilities. The resulting schedule of speakers very much reflected a compromise between their seniority and their broadcasting talent.⁹²

The decisions on party election broadcasts were made after consultation with the BBC and ABC and were in line with the practices in Britain and Australia. Further decisions on political broadcasting in election year were New Zealand's own and continued the reluctance to enter the political realm that had long characterised New Zealand broadcasting. In April 1963 the board was asked to approve a proposal for a series of half-hour political discussions on television. The request was approved but was hemmed with restrictions that made the programme irrelevant to the coming election. There could be seven programmes at most, those featured could not include MPs or political candidates, the series had to end before the election campaign began and the topics under discussion could not include questions likely to become party issues.⁹³

An even stronger withdrawal from political discussion was ordered in June. The period from 20 June to the election day in November was divided by nomination day, the day by which all parliamentary candidates had to be announced. For the entire period news involving political issues was prohibited from local bulletins. It was permitted on national bulletins, where 'newsworthy items with a fair balance' would be selected. The names of candidates could appear on news broadcasts only when essential to the newsworthiness of the item. The bar applied to candidates and to issues; the fluoridation of water supplies was the example given which might have a political connotation. At public events and official functions, MPs and other candidates could not broadcast unless they were there in an official capacity and the broadcast was approved by the NZBC head office. Until nomination day, stations could seek no discussions, talks or interviews with political figures or on political topics and when they were asked for, they could proceed only with the permission of the corporation chairman. This was a rare occasion when Stringer's authority was not considered sufficient. From nomination day, no political discussions were allowed at all except for the approved schedule of pre-election broadcasts determined by the prime minister.⁹⁴ The restrictions were interpreted strictly. Rino Tirikatene experienced perhaps the strongest application of the ban. An entertainer as well as a Labour candidate, Tirikatene had made two 45 rpm recordings of songs; both were withdrawn from the NZBC library in June until the election was over.

In the most forlorn attempt to dictate the election broadcasts, the NZBC also felt it necessary to intervene in what candidates were allowed to say on air. The political parties permitted to broadcast received letters from Sceats that included the following: 'The Corporation as a statutory body is both morally and legally responsible for all matters in its broad-

casts, other than those taken from the House of Representatives. As such it feels impelled to request candidates using election broadcasting facilities over its stations to confine their remarks to policy matters.⁹⁵ This was a fruitless request and produced no discernible change in the conduct of New Zealand electioneering.

The election night results were widely covered on radio but not on television, where the normal programmes were scheduled, with final results for electorates given during natural breaks. In a strange decision, the commercial stations were ordered to have no advertisements or sponsored programmes on election night.⁹⁶ They each reported their local results and also linked every half-hour with the main non-commercial stations, YA and YZ, for a summary of completed returns. YA and YZ gave the most detailed coverage, linking and devoting themselves to broadcasting progress and final results for all electorates. They also, for the first time on New Zealand radio, included expert commentary. This was given by Dr A. D. Robinson from the Victoria University Department of Political Science. The NZBC's own report on this aspect of its coverage judged it 'a very mixed blessing'. The problems were not caused by Robinson. He and his assistants were housed in a separate room away from immediate access to the results and were forced to walk back and forth to the studio. The flow of results, which was quicker than in previous elections, meant Robinson had to ad lib much of his commentary, which was also superfluous.⁹⁷

The election broadcasts brought the NZBC many brickbats and few bouquets. The corporation did its own synopsis of newspaper comments and found almost universal condemnation. The lack of television involvement in the broadcasts of results was deplored and the candidates' telecasts were described in such terms as 'uniform greyness' and 'semi-animated waxworks'. Critics felt the corporation was so determined to ensure candidates had equal treatment that it allowed only five-minute monologues with no impact. But the main focus of complaint was the allocation of broadcasting time to the political parties and the fact that this was made by the prime minister. Expressing a widely held view, one correspondent argued to Stringer, 'You are discriminating against Social Credit, Liberal and the Communists at the direction of the Prime Minister.'⁹⁸ Most newspaper editorials saw the corporation's decision as an abrogation of its own responsibility. The New Zealand Council of Civil Liberties gave its view: 'Some people might call it, harshly and uncompromisingly, cowardice; some, less impolite, the pursuit of expediency; we ourselves can hardly regard it as a manifestation of independence'.⁹⁹

The matter rebounded on the NZBC when, in an attempt to get some radio publicity for his party, R. M. Hutton-Potts, the Liberal leader, arranged to broadcast one 15-minute address from the Sydney radio station, 2UE. At this stage Holyoake, conveniently overlooking his own role in refusing air time to the Liberals, released a press statement asking the

NZBC 'to endeavour to provide some broadcasting time for the Liberal Party'.¹⁰⁰ One half-hour of the 24 hours of radio time remained unallocated and, with Holyoake's permission, the NZBC arranged for Hutton-Potts to use this. The television allocation was increased by 10 minutes and this was also given to the Liberals. After the election board chairman Llewellyn stated that the allocation would be reviewed for the next election and the corporation might consider accepting the responsibility itself.¹⁰¹

The Communist Party remained without access to the airwaves though, after the election, J. L. Hartstonge, the Wellington radio district manager, offered it two minutes of radio time, as he did with other parties, to thank their supporters. The Communist candidates turned the offer down, labelling it hypocritical.¹⁰²

In all, the election coverage was one of New Zealand broadcasting's lesser achievements. Television remained in its infancy and, with its small audience, would have had only a limited role but this did not justify the corporation's lack of use of the medium. Various models from other countries were available but were neglected in favour of an uninteresting but determinedly unbiased series of set speeches. Greater use was made of radio but again fear of criticism of political bias made the NZBC reluctant to take advantage of radio's potential for political discussion and election campaigning. New Zealand had been changed, not least by broadcasting itself, and radio and television were appropriate media for presenting major issues. Independence is not only given, it must also be exercised, and the election coverage raised doubts that the NZBC had the necessary resolve.

3

WHO CONTROLS BROADCASTING?

Although they came to it late, New Zealanders accepted television with the rapidity and enthusiasm they had traditionally shown for communication innovations. Licensed set numbers passed the 5000 mark in 1961 and 500,000 in 1967. Television watching increased during the 1960s to become the dominant evening leisure activity. It offered another window on the world and a new awareness and membership of a growing international culture of which television programmes, from news to drama, sport to light entertainment, were a major aspect. The 1960s were years of considerable social change. The building of the Berlin wall in 1961 indicated the extent of international divisions but, conversely, that year also saw the first manned space flight, by cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, which signalled the dawn of a new understanding of the planet's finite nature and the interconnectedness of its inhabitants. The decade was one of a new internationalism in which New Zealand began to lose its isolation and was drawn into the global mainstream. Broadcasting, part of the new order and a major vehicle for its promotion, was joined by many changes within New Zealand, from the opening of Auckland's International Airport in 1966 to the ending in 1967 of 6pm closing for the sale of alcohol in hotels. New Zealand also shared in many international changes, from an increasing concentration of the population in urban areas, to an acceptance of the contraceptive pill.

In the new internationalism there were also new divisions. Influential on broadcasting was the generation gap, caused by the rise of a youth culture, with its own popular music, appreciated by a global audience and, with the increasingly competent equipment available to play recorded music, taken into their homes and into their lives. In the 1960s, popular music became a leading power in social action, from commentary to strident and provocative criticism, and influential in areas from clothing fashion to contemporary poetry to trade figures and the GNP. This decade was an introduction to a way of life decisively different from that of the Depression and the war years, and distinct from the period of recovery and recuperation that followed them and became the increasingly stolid 1950s.

Broadcasting contributed to the cultural change in which interests and activities were shared by many nations. The large New Zealand crowds

that greeted and followed such visitors as The Beatles showed how avidly the country embraced the new. Sport became increasingly an international entertainment; New Zealand was thrilled by the exploits of its middle-distance runners at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964. Their victories strengthened the view that New Zealand was an equal and confident member of the community of nations.

Although broadcasting was a prominent part of a changing world and itself a vehicle for change, there was disagreement between corporation and political figures over the nature and future of radio and television and, on both sides, a reluctance to move with the times. Broadcasting in New Zealand increasingly lost touch with the tastes and aspirations of its audience, particularly the young. There was conflict at all levels about the purpose of broadcasting and a struggle developed for its control.

MINISTER, BOARD AND DIRECTOR-GENERAL

After the 1963 election, Prime Minister Holyoake replaced Kinsella as Minister of Broadcasting with W. J. (Jack) Scott. 'When he gave broadcasting to me Holyoake said he'd like me to control it,' said Scott. 'Kinsella had been a bit weak and Holyoake felt that we should keep a reasonable rein on the NZBC.'¹ It was as much a change in government policy as a Cabinet change. In 1961 Kinsella understood that he was to create an organisation that was as independent as possible yet served the needs of the country.² By late 1963 Holyoake felt the NZBC 'had ridden roughshod over Kinsella' and a change was needed.³ The government's altered attitude was due largely to increasing concern about the NZBC's capital outlay. The corporation had become skilled at circumventing the financial controls, in particular by breaking down major purchases to units of less than £25,000 so no ministerial approval was needed. Scott's appointment heralded an attempt at greater control of the NZBC and led to a redefinition of the relationships among minister, board and director-general.

The first clash was with Stringer, who gave Scott his view of the demarcation of responsibilities and asked the minister to continue to distance himself from NZBC affairs. Scott refused, warning that 'if I cut off your source of supply you won't get far without me'.⁴ From Scott's viewpoint, Stringer had dominated both the board and the minister and, in consequence, the NZBC had 'too vigorous an exercise of organizational autonomy'.⁵ The major conflict, though was between Scott and the board. Soon after the minister's appointment he differed with the board over the future of television, in particular the matter of a second television channel. At its 19 February 1964 meeting the board decided its financial position was so improved that television coverage could be speeded up and a second channel introduced. It did not see the cost as prohibitive. It had always planned

for two channels eventually; the transmitter buildings were designed to accommodate two transmitters and the masts to carry two aerial arrays. So much of the capital cost for a second channel was incorporated in the plans for first channel coverage. The extra cost was limited mainly to duplication of transmitters and aerial arrays, basic studio technical equipment and various structural alterations at the existing studios. The board estimated this extra cost at £1.5 million and sought government approval to proceed, arguing it could carry this amount from its revenue and so keep faith with the requirement that it not borrow capital.

The board considered that, with only one channel, programming possibilities were severely limited. The NZBC plan was to have one fully commercial and one non-commercial channel, the first to be regionally based, with programmes coming from Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, and the second to give national coverage once networking was possible. There was no intention to fund the non-commercial channel from the licence fee and the other from advertising. Indeed the board told the minister the licence fee could be eliminated and the corporation could still mount a two-channel operation.⁶

Scott was not impressed. He doubted the board's financial optimism and the corporation's subsequent performance supported his caution. But, more importantly, proceeding with a plan that would mean various areas of New Zealand receiving two-channel reception before others gained one was politically unacceptable. The government turned down the proposal but did give permission to accelerate first channel coverage as long as it continued to be financed out of revenue.⁷ The corporation was very disheartened by this government refusal and relations worsened when the corporation released a press statement announcing that its plans for a second channel had been thwarted by government procrastination.

The press statement signalled the end of Scott's trust in the board. Llewellyn offered his resignation but Scott would not accept it as it would appear to be the result of pressure. He made it clear, however, that the appointment would not be renewed. For his part, Llewellyn had no wish to continue. He was so convinced that the government was taking back control of broadcasting that he told Scott he wanted no more. 'Circumstances are developing at the present time as to indicate to me that the considered proposals of the broadcasting corporation are of no consequence in the ultimate determination of the policy regarding the future of broadcasting in this country. In these circumstances I must form the opinion that the corporation is little more than a cipher and in consequence I have to tell you that I shall not be available for reappointment when my term expires on 31 March 1965.' Llewellyn later offered to continue as chairman for a further year on the condition the government 'bring the corporation into its full confidence' on its second channel intentions. This brought no change of heart from the government. Three months later Llewellyn wrote further to

Scott saying he needed to devote his energies to his 'principal post' with the University Grants Committee and could not attend fully to 'the ramifying activities and problems' of the NZBC. Once more he declared himself unavailable for a further term with the corporation,⁸ and retired as chairman of the corporation on 31 March 1965. Scott favoured a full change in the board and Stenberg retired within the year. But Harris, a prominent figure in the National Party, was supported by caucus and continued on the board.⁹

Llewellyn was replaced by Charles A. McFarlane who chaired his first meeting of the board in May 1965. It was a difficult appointment. The chairman's job was a highly public position regularly surrounded by controversy and now made even more contentious by the government's desire to exert a stronger control over the corporation. Scott, who wanted a Wellington-based chairman available on a day-to-day basis, approached six possible chairmen before McFarlane accepted; Stringer claimed the total was 46.¹⁰ Whatever his placing on the list of possibles, McFarlane was an excellent choice for Scott's purpose. He was a former director-general of the P&T Department, experienced in the public service and well able to contend with Stringer. Also, McFarlane, who had recommended corporation control of broadcasting, was strongly opposed to the way it had been implemented in New Zealand, and went to the NZBC with the expectation that he would usher in large changes. McFarlane's view of the relationship between board and director-general was very different from Stringer's. Whereas Stringer saw the two as responsible for policy setting and day-to-day control respectively, McFarlane regarded such a distinction as artificial and untenable. For him the board was the senior authority, responsible for and therefore properly involved in all decision-making in principle and, in practice, any decision-making it considered appropriate. Stringer pointed to BBC practice stretching back to the days of Reith as support for his understanding; McFarlane pointed to contemporary BBC practice to support his opposing view. Lord Normanbrook, then chairman of the BBC board of governors, advocated precisely such an approach, pointing out that 'constitutionally the Board of Governors *is* the BBC'. Normanbrook regarded the board as making the decisions 'on all major questions of management and on all matters of controversy, political, religious and cultural'. McFarlane saw this as a clear guide for New Zealand. Ominously for Stringer, Normanbrook also noted that in the BBC the director-general was appointed by the board of governors.¹¹

McFarlane and Stringer had first met in 1941 while diploma of public administration students at Victoria University and had a cordial personal relationship but they clashed professionally. Their first battle came with the allocation of rooms for the board. Llewellyn had always worked from his University Grants Committee office but McFarlane immediately furnished a suite of board offices in the NZBC head office. Stringer did not consider

it a good idea to have the office of the corporation in the same building as the administration; McFarlane could see no point in having it elsewhere. The office Stringer originally allocated for McFarlane gave nothing like 'the distinction the function required' and was rejected by the new chairman who then personally arranged suitable facilities.

Office arrangements, however, were soon overshadowed by McFarlane's next requirement, that Stringer cease contact with Scott: all ministerial contact was to be with the chairman. McFarlane never succeeded fully in this, nor did he wish to. Even the minister had to be 'gently chided' to break the old habit of the chairman learning of matters second-hand through the director-general. While heading the P&T Department, McFarlane had accepted contact between the minister and other senior executives on the understanding that he was kept informed. But in the NZBC he was less accommodating, both to break the habit of previous years and to stop his director-general from attempting to get ministerial agreement to proposals that the board would not have agreed to.¹²

The weakened link between minister and director-general was replaced by a strengthened board. McFarlane described the board on his arrival as an excrescence on an ongoing institution, uninfluential because of its limited contact beyond monthly meetings. Under McFarlane the board became involved in the day-to-day affairs of the corporation. To this end the government passed the 1965 Broadcasting Corporation Amendment Act, which increased the number of board members from three to 'not less than three nor more than seven'. Llewellyn's board, faced with the inevitability of an increase, had been 'strongly of the opinion that its members should number five and not seven'.¹³ The government rejected this and, in line with McFarlane's wishes, appointed a seven-member board from 1 April 1966. Stenberg did not seek reappointment and retired on 31 March 1966. McFarlane and Reeves Harris continued and were joined by R. J. Laurenson, liaison officer for the National Party, J. B. Price, managing director of Shell Oil, D. F. C. Saxton, general manager of Taranaki Newspapers, G. E. Stock, a lawyer, and R. K. Trimmer, chairman of the Northland Harbour Board. Saxton had been a journalist but otherwise none of the members, other than Harris, had experience in any aspect of broadcasting. Clearly, the government saw their business expertise as more appropriate and McFarlane wanted board members who had experience in other big organisations.¹⁴ Politically, too, they were suitable. Laurenson's political affiliations were the most public but all the new members, as Holcroft noted, 'appeared to be at home in Government circles'.¹⁵

A bigger workload was not the only reason for increasing the size of the board. The minister said, too, that it was impossible to hold one meeting when two members were ill.¹⁶ McFarlane as a new chairman joined two other board members who had been in office since the NZBC began. In his book *Politics and Broadcasting*, Gregory argues that McFarlane wanted

a larger board because, with only three members, 'the other two members could easily shape decisions against the chairman's will'.¹⁷ McFarlane was supported by the minister who saw more members as a way of strengthening the board's position against the director-general.

Scott later gave his version of the reasons for a bigger board. He saw it as flowing from the changes in timing for full first channel coverage and the board's desire for an early decision on the second channel. The 1961 policy was to phase in full first channel coverage over a seven- to 10-year period but this was speeded up by the advent of translator societies. Scott maintained that he was in the course of obtaining Cabinet approval for an increase in funds to accelerate full coverage when the NZBC put before him a proposal for a second channel. He considered this irresponsible and felt that the three-man board had acted without adequate consideration. He decided, therefore, to enlarge the board and 'to encourage some of the most responsible businessmen in New Zealand to be appointed'.

The 1965 Amendment Act also provided a solution of sorts to a long-running dispute between the NZBC and the Post Office regarding the amount of the licence fee retained by the Post Office, which was the collecting agency. The corporation had always disputed the Post Office's assessment of its costs. More serious was the dispute over the Post Office's costs in investigating complaints of radio and television interference. The NZBC felt the Post Office should do this task at its own expense, whereas the Post Office held the great majority of the complaints it dealt with were to do with broadcasting; it therefore subtracted its considerable costs from the licence fee.¹⁸ Scott reported that in Nelson in 1964 Post Office charges for such investigations exceeded licence fee revenue,¹⁹ and he had issued a written direction to the corporation to pay a certain amount. This, the only use made of the powers whereby the minister could direct the corporation, came to nothing. The NZBC refused to pay and the Crown Law Office agreed that the minister was wrong to give the order. When he became chairman, McFarlane was presented with what he regarded as the 'ridiculous situation' of the directors-general of the NZBC and the Post Office threatening to sue one another. The solution to such disagreements was set out in the 1965 act: the auditor-general would make a decision that would be binding on the two parties. Although this offered a way out of an impasse, it did nothing to diminish either the continuing contest or the broadcasters' dissatisfaction with the Post Office.

In spite of its new size and composition, the board was as independent as its predecessor. Holcroft's summation is worth quoting. 'Although I was prejudiced against the new Corporation, believing it too obviously represented party and business interests, I felt reassured after I had been summoned to one of its meetings. In any gathering of New Zealanders, experienced in affairs, there are always men of substance, not to be hurried into decisions, and ready to have their own opinions challenged.'²⁰



Its public image became of increasing importance to the NZBC during the 1960s. ANS WESTRA

Holcroft's call to the board was in answer to an unsuccessful proposal from R. J. Laurenson, attending his first meeting, that the *Listener* be privatised. Although not rejected out of hand, the proposal to relinquish the weekly, which had a prominent place in New Zealand cultural life and was a substantial business in its own right, aroused no interest from the board.

It was galling for the minister to realise that the new board held the same view as its predecessor on both the timing for and the appropriate use of a second television channel. For Scott, who rejected the proposal, 'it then seemed that the independent corporation . . . might well become a colossus in its complete monopoly in radio and television.'²¹

The 1965 act caused a change in relationship between board and director-general. The enlargement of the board signalled a new understanding of the proper involvement of the directors in the day-to-day running of the NZBC, an end to the acceptance of a separation of powers between the board and the director-general. For Stringer, McFarlane's board meant the start of attacks on his independence. 'My board members felt they were on the board of a large public company. They had no concept of the function of a board member of a broadcasting corporation concerned with policy making.'²² The board, however, was voicing not just its members' private understanding but also a government wish that the control of the NZBC be changed. All the directors but McFarlane had extensive

experience of running private companies. McFarlane, however, as an ex-director-general of the P&T Department, was learned in the ways of government, and so of the NZBC, and therefore the chairman and his board were a formidable combination. 'They had much to learn,' Holcroft wrote 'Stringer . . . in long sessions explained and explained calling in his lieutenants — the Controller of Administration, the Directors of Television, Sound Radio and Engineering — and summoning section heads to supply special information.'²³ This summoning of other staff, against Stringer's will, was part of the new board's strategy, to have information from others than the director-general.

In 1957 McFarlane had recommended that the broadcasting corporation follow the Reserve Bank model of making the chairman also the chief executive officer. When he became chairman in 1965 he adapted this idea and attempted to incorporate Stringer by making the director-general automatically a member of the board. This did not happen: it was opposed both by Stringer, who feared losing his independence, and by the minister, who was reluctant to appoint Stringer to what he saw as an even more powerful position. Stringer continued to assert the independent authority of the director-general but he was fighting a losing battle. He was opposed to any alteration of the 1961 act and McFarlane regarded him as 'leader of the opposition'.²⁴ McFarlane's board wanted a full rewriting of the Broadcasting Act. Unwilling to appoint a sub-committee of the board to draft such a new act because the director-general had a statutory right to be a member of all committees, McFarlane performed the task personally. He was, however, unable to get his minister to accept a full rewriting of the legislation for Scott already had the subsequent Broadcasting Authority Act in mind, though he was as yet unwilling to confide this to the corporation. But amendments were possible and Stringer's final defeat came with the 1967 Broadcasting Corporation Amendment Act.

In spite of his views about Stringer as director-general, Scott was not prepared to act legislatively against him and change the nature of his appointment. He considered that the position of director-general, though not Stringer personally, required some protection from the board. But L. A. (Lance) Adams-Schneider, who succeeded Scott as minister in the Cabinet changes after the 1966 election, did accept the board's argument and introduced the 1967 act,²⁵ which dealt particularly with the running of the board and its relationship with the director-general. One clause enabled the board to appoint a deputy chairman, thus allowing it to operate as usual even in the absence of the chairman. The change was indicative of the board's more full-time attitude. The most important clause, however, changed the nature of the director-general's appointment: he or she was no longer appointed by the governor-general but by the corporation, and on such terms and conditions as it thought fit. This was Stringer's final defeat in his long battle to have the director-general, with the minister and

the board, as one of a triumvirate ruling the NZBC, none of the three with excessive power. The director-general was now clearly the servant of the board.

PROGRAMME ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Although the NZBC had the power to institute advisory committees, it did not do so until March 1965 when the board approved in principle Stringer's recommendation to establish three regional committees, northern, central and southern. Stringer saw them principally as devices enabling station managers and programme officers to remain in touch with the community. It is notable that their establishment came at the end of Llewellyn's term; the committees' constitution was approved and a press statement released at the final meeting before McFarlane took up office. Stringer, who had experienced advisory committees during the last years of the NZBS, had little respect for them, regarding them merely as vehicles for the same individuals who constantly dominated at meetings. He had allowed no community advice for the corporation's first three years but then, aware that he was entering a new era with an active board, he established the programme committees as another type of official body whose advice could counterbalance the views of the board.

Each committee held four meetings annually and all were attended by one or more of Stringer and the directors of sound broadcasting and television. Although Stringer argued that the Auckland committee was dominated by one person, in general the committees were not forums for pressure groups or individuals with their own idiosyncratic views. They were thoughtful assemblies that accepted the importance of broadcasting and, in spite of reservations about the representative nature of their membership, did successfully perform the important function of giving station managers and programme officers some indication of community feeling.

The deliberations at the first meeting of each of the three committees were reported and discussed at board level and, from 1967, the board held an annual meeting with the chair and deputy chairpersons of all the committees. Such meetings were, however, due as much to the board's desire to prevent the committees from adopting too high a public profile as to a wish to hear their concerns.²⁶ Although independent, the committees could discuss only approved topics and were not automatically entitled to receive information they requested. For instance, a request for information about election policy resulted in the supply of historical material but nothing on current policy.²⁷ The committees' largely local input did not influence the centrally controlled NZBC.

Although the advisory committees did present the NZBC with some outside feelings and attitudes, the nature of their representation is open to doubt. In spite of the minister's suggestion that any viewers' association

should, if it wished, be granted direct representation on the committees, the board decided to appoint members as individuals rather than as spokespeople for organisations.²⁸ Stringer talked about the committees becoming representative bodies with their positions filled by an election among licence holders, but nothing was done to test the possibility of such a system, let alone move towards it. The corporation itself had the most influence on the make-up of the committees and though there is no suggestion that the members were chosen because they were stalwart NZBC supporters, there is little evidence to show they truly represented their communities.

Stringer felt the committees became 'stultified', with their effectiveness destroyed by a board jealous of losing any of its policy-making authority. But this is a partisan view. Stringer was at least equally concerned that none of *his* power be diluted and the word 'advisory' in the committees' title points to the nature and limits of their influence. In the longer term, the committees' most important role was probably to provide the first broadcasting contact and experience for people who went on to become members of other more influential broadcasting bodies.²⁹

RADIO

Bill McMillan was senior technician at 1ZD Tauranga during the time of transmitter development at Te Aroha. Once the pilot transmitter was installed, a private translator was erected at Tauranga on the hill above Welcome Bay, making television reception in the area possible. McMillan immediately purchased a Philips kitset and built the family's first television.³⁰ Although he was more knowledgeable than most, and in the vanguard, he does indicate a wider change as television usurped radio's position as *the* home evening entertainment medium. The repercussions on radio were large. McMillan remembers evening advertising dwindling badly at 1ZD over the next few years.³¹ This was common to the commercial radio stations as television entered their reception zones. In 1966 commercial radio lost £582, its first loss since the start of commercial radio 30 years before.³²

The growth of television was not solely responsible for radio's woes. Stringer, asked by the minister to account for the change, saw the impact of television on the evening radio audience, previously the chief source of revenue, as pivotal, but he also added two further reasons: the rise of costs in recent years and the level of licence fee income. This had not covered the cost of non-commercial radio since 1962/63 when deficits had returned and there was a loss of £40,731.³³ In the early 1960s the stations' advertising revenue did not justify the opening of more commercial stations but the new stations both allowed the extension of NZBC news gathering and were an attempt to increase licence fee revenue. Even

though the stations were not profitable on their commercial revenue alone they did boost radio ownership and therefore licence fee income, though this, as always, was accounted as non-commercial station income only. So the commercial division's financial difficulties were increased by the addition of the new stations.³⁴

Radio's problems were also exacerbated by the NZBC's slowness to accept the changes in broadcasting. Radio no longer had the undivided loyalty of the audience and its programmes, particularly the evening quiz shows and serials, were competing directly with television. Elsewhere in the world radio had accepted the changes by complementing rather than competing with television and the most successful stations accomplished this by emphasising the new popular music. The NZBC accepted such music only grudgingly, confining it, by and large, to distinct programmes such as hit parades. By going head to head with television, radio, particularly its commercial stations, was fighting a losing battle but this was not immediately apparent in the mid-1960s and there was little willingness to address the problem.

Instead the NZBC strategy was to accentuate the differences between commercial and non-commercial radio's local and national orientations. When James Kemp arrived in New Zealand in 1964 on secondment from the BBC he found it strange to listen to announcers giving lists of cancelled events and quickly realised that radio broadcasting 'had stimulated local interests and become an integral part of community life'. He considered New Zealand had a local broadcasting that was not available to the BBC.³⁵ This was perhaps epitomised at Rotorua's 1ZC when an inebriated tourist who had forgotten where his hotel was arrived inexplicably at the studio. After extracting 30s from him for one 120-word advertisement, the station made a successful plea to local hotel proprietors to call if the lost visitor was one of their patrons.³⁶ Such local broadcasting was a hallmark of the commercial stations which were, properly, called and regarded as community stations. Their extensive local involvement went well beyond commercial needs to continue the traditional understanding of broadcasting as a public service.

The non-commercial stations, on the other hand, stressed their national focus, especially as the ability to network was developed during the 1960s. It had already happened for particular programmes, but the step to a full-time non-commercial network was taken on 14 September 1964 when the stations' output became known as the National Programme. Linked initially by wide-band telephone lines, the four YA stations, plus the non-commercial stations in Hamilton, Rotorua, Napier, Greymouth and Invercargill, were all joined to the single programme originating from Wellington. Gisborne joined within the first year and over the years the network was further extended. All stations could step out of the network to present local programmes, such as gardening and request sessions.



On the right Peter Downes, NZBC producer, and next to him Don Hamlen, NZBC panel operator, enjoying the Cambridge Circus revue recording for radio in Auckland, 1964.

There were also breaks after some news bulletins when individual stations could broadcast a further local bulletin. But the trend, over time, was to decrease the local content and increase the national network component. This change was accompanied by an improvement in the standard of the broadcasts. Rather than eight and more separate broadcasts, there was now only one. It could be more closely supervised and the production and presentation staff were the pick of the previous group.³⁷

The start of the National Programme was the accomplishment of the dream, first put into policy by Gordon Coates in 1924, to have one programme heard the length of New Zealand. It was a significant change for the country and, for broadcasters, it brought a new sense of purpose. Younger radio people, such as Peter Downes, posted to the non-commercial stations but envious of their commercial counterparts and wishing to be with them, now developed a commitment to the National Programme and grew as broadcasters with it.

Excluded from the national link were the X-class stations, originally devised as combined commercial and non-commercial stations. In the 1960s the requirement for more income from the loss-making commercial stations, coupled with the concentration of non-commercial programming



Technician Bill Cousins and announcer Terry O'Brien of Blenheim's 2ZE demonstrate the local focus of commercial radio at the Marlborough A&P show, 1965. GODFREY GRAY

on the networked stations, meant the end of non-commercial programming on X-class stations. Gradually, during the decade, all became fully commercial stations.

Once the National Programme began the corporation renewed the local orientation of the commercial stations, exhorting the Z- and X-class stations to expand this role. In December 1964, for instance, Sceats contacted all Z- and X-class stations asking them to find ways of fulfilling 'our declared policy of increased activity in local affairs' and requested, in particular, regional local programmes for coverage of the 1965 local body elections. This even led to a relaxation of the head office overview of political programming: local stations were given a new autonomy to decide whether and when local MPs could broadcast from local stations on local issues.³⁸

There were attempts to change and improve radio's daytime offerings, notably the women's programmes which were greatly increased in scope under the leadership of Prudence Gregory. Interviews with people of interest became regular features. But these remedies brought about only a temporary increase in the daytime radio audience. The women's programmes suffered in the long term from wider social changes as many



Jessica Weddell. NZMA

more women entered the workforce, depriving the NZBC of its home-bound audience.

The new local emphasis in radio led to a major innovation: the introduction of talkback radio, in which an announcer discusses and offers opinions on a variety of subjects and invites phoned audience contributions which are broadcast to become part of the programme. Prudence Gregory learnt of the talkback format while on a study tour of the United States. She reported on it to a conference of women's programmes presenters in 1965 and the format was given a two-month trial from 2XB Masterton, with Jessica Weddell as the first host. On 4 October 1965 all the commercial stations renamed their women's programmes *Person to Person*, extended their duration from one to two and a half hours and included a talkback segment. Initial fears that New Zealanders were too inhibited to make talkback a success proved unfounded. Any reticence came from the corporation, which greatly restricted the range of acceptable topics, and from the announcers who, unlike many of their later counterparts, preferred to draw out opinions from listeners rather than lead the discussion with their own views. The introduction of talkback assisted the commercial

stations, but only for a time. The format did not survive the introduction of afternoon television in 1967 and commercial radio's chances of competing with television were further reduced from June of that year with the start of *On Camera*, an on-screen equivalent of *Person to Person*. In Dunedin, with Eileen Cook, and in the main market of Auckland, with Sonia King, the programme even used presenters who had fronted the radio show.

In these years the audience for the commercial stations dwindled in the face of competition from television. Radio innovation lay with the National Programme as it began to explore the possibilities of its New Zealand-wide reach. In spite of their best efforts, the commercial stations continued in the doldrums, apart from their major revenue earners, the breakfast sessions, broadcast before television began for the day.

NZBC FINANCES

The failure of commercial radio in the face of television meant a significant change in the NZBC finances. As radio revenue decreased, it was replaced. A small part came from a change in fortune for the *Listener*. The magazine's monopoly of the right to publish programme details a week in advance became of increased value with the spread of television and the *Listener's* circulation grew accordingly. It passed the 100,000 mark in 1964 as television licence holdings climbed over 300,000. The *Listener* continued with a deficit, however, not returning a profit until the 1967/68 year. The corporation's coffers were sustained by television. In 1966, the first year commercial radio suffered a loss, the *Listener* was in deficit to a total of £20,896, national radio had a £271,414 deficit and concert activities had a deficit of £238,870, this being mainly the salary costs of the symphony orchestra. The entire corporation was carried by the surplus from television.

As with radio, the NZBC divided television for its annual accounts into commercial and national divisions, with advertising receipts and licence fees, respectively, being the major components of the income of the two divisions. The 1966 television surplus was £494,169 from commercial television, essentially the profit on advertising, plus £1,559,753 from national television, essentially the net income from television licence fees. What had began as a broadcasting enterprise sustained financially by commercial radio quickly became a number of loss-making activities kept solvent by the giant of television. Even here, in spite of television's commercial nature, it was the licence fee income that sustained the NZBC, and this continued for the rest of the corporation's lifetime. In its final report, for the year ending 31 March 1975, the only commercial activity of the NZBC to return a profit was the *Listener*. All others, including commercial television, were in deficit. Notably commercial radio lost \$1.45 million,

non-commercial radio lost \$4.32 million and concert activities lost \$1.3 million. Only the \$16.8 million income from television licence fees sustained the corporation and allowed it to post a small, final surplus of \$219,341. So while the corporation was a commercial organisation its commercial success was restrained. More importantly, it was a public broadcaster sustained by licence fee income.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

When Alan Morris became chief producer in 1963, this appointment led, among other programmes, to the start of current affairs broadcasting on television. Morris was well versed in the field. He started his broadcasting career in 1946 when he became a copywriter for 4ZB but most of his experience was in England and the Netherlands. In particular, he had much experience of directing *This Week*, ITV's flagship current affairs programme. He was eager to start a New Zealand current affairs programme but felt unable to do so in his first year back in the country. But when fellow New Zealander Allan Martin, who had eight years' experience in London with Rediffusion, as producer and director, also came back, Morris felt ready. Unlike their compatriots who had gone overseas and learnt a smattering of television, to return, in Kevan Moore's self-deprecating words, as 'the one-eyed man leading the blind',³⁹ Morris and Martin had gained much television experience and were well regarded internationally. *Compass*, a weekly half-hour current affairs programme, was the first result of their collaboration: Martin was the producer and the front-man was Morris. It began in October 1964 with one reporter, Ian Johnstone, but others were soon added to the team. For the first time in New Zealand broadcasting, this group included researchers, the vital background workers who provided the information on which items were based. From this point the NZBC began to amass the files of newspaper clippings and the like which gave the background information for a range of broadcast material. The effects spread beyond *Compass* into news and current affairs generally.

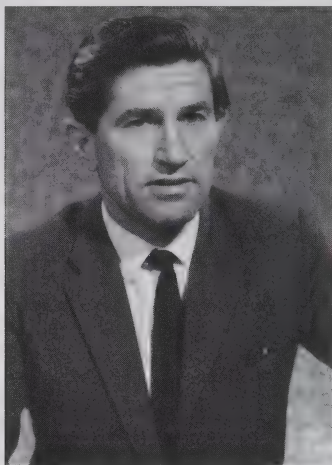
To provide enough material for a weekly programme, *Compass* often contained imported films about overseas current affairs issues. However its major contribution was as the first programme to address both domestic and international issues regularly from a New Zealand viewpoint. Many of the programmes dealt directly with political issues and this was a new experience not only for the audience but also for broadcasting executives and politicians. Whereas the Holyoake administration had become concerned about the corporation's financial actions, from this time the government's anxieties focused on political programming as it became the first New Zealand administration to experience the scrutiny of news and current affairs broadcasters. Such scrutiny is inevitably tense but was espe-



Alan Morris. NZMA

cially so as politicians and broadcasters, and NZBC executives, began a long process of learning and accepting the boundaries of acceptable conduct in the new situation.

Crucial was the extent to which politicians or broadcasters determined the content of political current affairs programming. There were always those who considered that the old habits continued, that there was government interference in what topics were chosen and in the way programmes were made. For others, the problem lay with the NZBC. As Ian Johnstone argued, 'It was rather our own sense of uncertainty and our own self-censorship lest we offend.' The interviewers certainly found the procedure for interviewing dignitaries obsequious. Johnstone has spoken of the ritual whenever the prime minister was on *Compass*. 'The DG, the director of television, the head of public affairs and the station manager would stand in a row. . . . The prime minister would be welcomed and . . . all four gentlemen would bring him up the stairs and I would be there. And this of course is young Johnstone. . . . You would then negotiate in as firm a way as you could as the minion there what the questions would be.' The interviews were not live. Immediately after an interview was recorded, everyone would watch the result and, if the prime minister requested it, the interview would be re-recorded. Johnstone found the whole experience intimidating.



Allan Martin, NZMA

Stringer was well aware that he was criticised for being present: 'They think I was holding it too tightly'. He regarded the prime minister as 'entitled to be met by someone responsible but we also had an alternative angle'. Holyoake in particular, Stringer considered, returned from each of his overseas trips ready to instruct NZBC staff in the proper and more flattering placement of cameras.⁴⁰ Stringer felt he should be on hand to support his staff and prevent them from being 'browbeaten by the politicians'. But he was equally concerned with placating politicians so that they would allow the corporation's continued growth. In particular, Stringer wanted permission for a corporation-controlled second television channel and was ready to delay any current affairs maturity to achieve that goal. Politicians' bullying and broadcasters' timidity were both consequences of the NZBC's politically controlled and uncertain future. Although the first current affairs programmes represented a considerable advance, they were more significant for the later developments that followed from them.

The difficulties with *Compass* in particular, and corporation current affairs broadcasting in general, became publicly apparent in 1966 with what became known as the Bick affair. Gordon Bick, an Englishman and ex-Fleet Street journalist, had joined the NZBC in 1964. He worked on *Compass* as a film director and, in 1966, as a producer. Bick sought and gained approval to make a programme on New Zealand's changeover to decimal currency in 1967, but soon encountered difficulties. Part of the programme concentrated on possible price rises resulting from the lack of exact comparability

between the old and new currencies. This was a matter of some controversy and, with a general election close, finance minister R. D. Muldoon would not let members of the Decimal Currency Board appear on the programme to debate this issue; he decreed that it was a matter on which only government members could put the government's view. Muldoon was ready to argue the case for the government himself but, with the 1966 election looming, was barred by the corporation's rules from appearing. The result was the postponement of the programme until after the election, the resignation of Bick, tired of 'the weak men of the NZBC and their timid decisions', and considerable parliamentary debate and press publicity that made the whole issue a *cause célèbre*.⁴¹ The publicity and Bick's later book, *The Compass File*, brought the corporation's reticence into the open. Among other examples, Bick contended that a report by James Cameron on North Vietnam was shelved until after the election and that plans to interview Ian Smith, the Rhodesian leader, were stopped because it could embarrass Keith Holyoake while he was attending the Commonwealth prime ministers' conference.⁴² The entire, confused affair left little doubt that, whether from government pressure or corporation desire to please, NZBC current affairs programming was extensively influenced by principles other than those supporting the free flow of information.

A further addition to television's current affairs programmes was *Column Comment*, a weekly discussion of newspaper journalism, which also began in 1964. Making his first television appearance as the commentator was Ian Cross, a man who, over the next two decades, would become an increasingly powerful broadcasting presence. Cross was experienced in journalism but did not then earn a living from it. He had had a year at Harvard University as a Nieman journalism fellow and *Column Comment* reflected his view that New Zealand journalism was both old-fashioned and grossly inadequate. He considered he was judging the main New Zealand newspapers with an affectionate respect for what should be their real purpose. The reaction from a press unused to criticism was strong but the programme was a factor in starting a public movement to assess journalism. And the NZBC executives were behind the programme. Although its long-term aim was to promote journalism, the short-term method was to castigate faults and this endeared *Column Comment* to a broadcasting hierarchy happy to return some of the barrage of criticism it had received from the press.

Column Comment was produced by John Scully but the content was Cross's. It began as a single trial programme but he was asked to return the following week and the programme became a long-running and widely watched commentary on New Zealand journalism. Other commentators appeared but Cross was involved, off and on, for the next seven years. To his amusement, after the first four episodes he was presented with instructions on the content and purpose of the programme, based on those already screened. He describes the making of the early programmes as 'being locked

in a studio alone with a single camera staring at you and when the red light went on you started talking'. The programme was meant to last seven minutes but, as with much early television, timing was not critical and Cross once overran his time by six minutes without any adverse reaction. There was, he says, 'a glorious improvisation' about early programming.⁴³

There were also changes in radio current affairs programming. The main addition to the schedule was *Checkpoint*, which began well after the successful establishment of television current affairs. It was first mooted and the title suggested by news and public affairs broadcasting head Edward Parkinson in November 1966 as a 20-minute programme on the National Programme after the 9pm news Monday to Friday. Parkinson's aim was 'to broaden current affairs broadcasting on sound radio and supplement the existing news coverage with analysing, background and comment'. Three or four topics would be covered in each programme and topic choice would 'depend on its importance in that day's news and its relevance to New Zealand'. Explicitly, *Checkpoint* was designed to explain and to assess the significance of events. The programme was to start in February 1967 but it did not air until April.⁴⁴

The proposal was well received by all stations, though there was some disquiet over the ending or moving of programmes that were displaced. K. H. Funnell, the deputy editor of current affairs, was responsible for the planning of the programme and its first producers were Alister Taylor, Paul Cheesewright and Bill Manson. At the end of 1967, Funnell solicited opinions on *Checkpoint* from various people. J. G. Pryde, the general secretary of Federated Farmers, likened the programme to an editorial feature in a daily newspaper. (In fact, the views expressed are always those of the speakers rather than of the broadcasting organisation.) Pryde, however, also considered the farming sector had received 'very fair coverage' from *Checkpoint*.⁴⁵ W. B. Sutch congratulated Funnell on breaking through New Zealand's woeful shortage of informed journalism and noted that any weaknesses in the programme arose from a lack of experts who were also up to 'the level of good journalism' on radio. For Sutch, the reliance on university experts was often a problem;⁴⁶ this emphasis on academic commentators still irks some producers and listeners. But as Funnell noted soon after *Checkpoint* began, in a small population it is often 'extremely difficult to find people outside the universities who are (a) sufficiently well informed to comment authoritatively, and, (b) are not inhibited from commenting freely, because they occupy some official function or other'. The NZBC saw a television *Checkpoint* programme as the ultimate aim.⁴⁷ This has never eventuated and it is doubtful if such daily immediacy is feasible on screen, or whether such journalism is economically viable on commercial television. On the National Programme, however, *Checkpoint* became well regarded and, at the time of writing, is still on air each weeknight after the 5pm news.

NEWS

In spite of Stringer's expansion of the corporation's news-gathering ability, it was still hampered by inexperience and by a lack of news sense and support. Because of the need to devote income to coverage expansion, the NZBC remained reluctant to spend money on sending news staff to the source of stories. A major example of this came in 1964 with the Tokyo Olympics. By this time most countries had accepted that the Olympics were a source of both general news and specific sports commentaries. The ABC and most broadcasting organisations included news staff in their coverage team and the NZPA's team was headed by a general news reporter. The NZBC, however, sent only sports commentators. They did well in their specialised areas and their work was well received at home. There were live radio commentaries on major events, followed by later television films, and New Zealand rejoiced at the successes of their athletes, especially the double gold medals for Peter Snell. The non-events news reporting, however, was not done well. Coury acknowledged that his team did a good job in the circumstances but there was considerable disquiet at the newsdesk about the slowness and small number of cables giving details of the New Zealand team's activities. The NZBC news was soundly beaten by the newspapers in its coverage of all but the events commentaries.⁴⁸

James Kemp, the BBC news editor invited to survey the NZBC news services, presented his report in March 1964, but the board did not consider the matters he raised until July when it accepted Stringer's proposals for changes.⁴⁹ Local news services were to be developed at all stations and there would be a news section and a public affairs section, each serving both radio and television. The intention was to redeploy as far as possible staff made available by the National Programme changes. The distinction between news and public, or current, affairs had little practical meaning at this stage. Although the plan was eventually to have separate heads for the two sections, Stringer intended, in the first instance, to appoint the one person to head both, a controller of news and public affairs on secondment from the BBC.⁵⁰

A further and pivotal decision was taken when the board looked at its overseas news sources. At its November 1964 meeting it began an alliance with Reuters and Visnews when Stringer announced that he had accepted Reuters' offer of a two-month trial service. The television news service, Visnews, was a continuation, in a new guise, of BCINA and Stringer proposed that the NZBC become a trust member of the new organisation. The matter was considered at length and, in June 1965, for £16,000, the NZBC bought D class Visnews shares, which rapidly escalated in value. There were, with the NZBC, a total of six shareholders: the ABC, BBC, CBC, the Rank organisation and Reuters. By purchasing the shares, the NZBC not only gained the Visnews film but was also effectively allied

with Reuters. These changes were a small part of global alterations in news agency structures, but the NZBC benefited and, within the year, was able to subscribe to what it termed a 'composite Reuter-Australian Associated Press-United Press International news service'.⁵¹ The corporation now had an effective source of world news. Although the shortwave receiving station at Quartz Hill remained in operation, it no longer had a pivotal role for the news service. Because Reuters was the major part of the NZPA foreign service, the corporation had reached parity with its newspaper competitors in terms of acquiring international news. They must now compete on how well they did at home.

THE DAILY MIRACLE

Stringer succeeded in his quest for a senior BBC person to be seconded to New Zealand: Waldo Maguire, the senior BBC news and current affairs employee, was appointed for one year in 1965. He was followed by Edward Parkinson, the BBC news editor for the Midland region, who took up a three-year secondment as controller of news and public affairs broadcasting on 1 February 1966.

In Coury's words, Maguire's time with the NZBC was 'really looked forward to and we were not disappointed'.⁵² Not only could Maguire cast an experienced eye over the New Zealand operation but his considerable mana allowed him to persuade senior NZBC executives to accept his many proposals for change. Maguire was appalled at the conditions under which the daily television news programme was made and broadcast. He described it as 'the daily miracle', a phrase to which his staff responded. To his superiors he was less colloquial and more direct. Maguire considered there was an ever present danger that the programme would not be transmitted: the daily miracle was not the quality of the programme, but that it was made and screened at all.

He applied immediately for another television studio to be built, suggesting it be constructed on the ground floor of the Waring Taylor Street building. It was, he argued, 'urgently required' since the minimal facilities available made the daily news 'hazardous in the extreme'. Maguire regarded the skill and ingenuity of his staff as impressive and encouraging but contended forcefully they must have the means to do their job properly. 'Normal development of news and public affairs programmes,' he wrote, 'cannot take place under the present conditions. It is impossible, for example, to conduct interviews in the present studio.' The television news was unable to handle any story breaking late in the day and could not bring journalists to the studio at short notice to report on major stories. There would be no improvement until studio accommodation was available. Maguire was unequivocal: 'This highly unsatisfactory state of affairs must be remedied.'⁵³



Waldo Maguire. NZMA

Maguire, also responsible for current affairs broadcasting, was equally scathing about this area. Although content with *Compass*, he was unimpressed by the nightly television *Postscript*, which the corporation regarded as a success. Current affairs programmes, Maguire argued, needed to be topical and recorded on the morning of transmission rather than two days before, as *Postscript* was. Once again, little could be done without adequate facilities and experienced staff.

Stringer and the board reacted rapidly. Stringer had a proposal before the board at its next meeting a fortnight later when it okayed seeking ministerial approval to spend £40,930 on a studio at Waring Taylor Street for news and public affairs programmes. The bulk of the cost, £34,700, was for equipment.⁵⁴ Even so, the process of gaining Cabinet approval and then purchasing and installing the equipment meant that it was June 1966, another 16 months, before the new studio was in use.

Maguire was also able to obtain approval for measures that had so far eluded Coury. A major example was the institution of a shift system for television news: a four-day rotating system with 10 hours of work per day. This enabled each shift to start early in the day and remain on duty through to the transmission of the 8pm news.

In a confidential report to Scott, the minister, Maguire repeated his views about the unsatisfactory nature of news working conditions. He was also less than flattering about the capabilities of the broadcasting news staff. In Britain, the most junior of Maguire's six assistant editors had 14 years' experience with the BBC; in New Zealand, the very young and inexperienced staff did not give Maguire confidence. He told Scott he was unsurprised by criticism of the news bulletins and, in particular, felt the corporation was open to libel suits. He strongly advised the minister to appoint a solicitor to the board; this was done when the board was expanded.⁵⁵

Maguire was not only able to tell the director-general and the board what broadcasting journalism should be, and what it needed; he also provided journalism leadership. This was tested regularly. In March 1965 Wellington hosted the conference of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. The 21 flags flying included that of North Vietnam, mistakenly raised instead of the South Vietnamese flag. The error was discovered and an NZBC cameraman arrived in time to film the offending flag being lowered and removed. Stringer did not want the item to appear on the news and told the newsroom so, but Waldo Maguire argued it was a good news story; he also had the acumen to note that 'anyway the newspapers will be using it'.⁵⁶ The item did appear on the news. It was one small step on the road to newsroom autonomy.

By mid-1965, when the Maguire-led changes were being introduced, the corporation still by no means had a mature news service. Bill Alexander, who joined the NZBC as a reporter that year, described it as 'in its infancy'. But there had been considerable developments. Necessary equipment and facilities were on hand or in preparation. Radio and television had separate editorial staff and, though they had the same news feeds, the two media's bulletins were beginning to become distinct from one another. The major exception to specialisation was the reporters, who were expected to cover for both radio and television, a requirement, says Alexander, that 'surprised some of our overseas colleagues because they thought it was impossible'. The dual coverage presented difficulties but was made less problematic because of the lack of haste for bulletins. It was only a few years since radio news had been confined to one daily bulletin at 9pm and, though the number of bulletins had increased, there was still no real sense of urgency. 'As long as we made our major bulletins we . . . could afford to let it slide for two or three hours in the afternoon. . . . We generally made the major radio bulletin of the evening.' In practice, priority was given to the preparation of the television news. 'You might have a good story. You would do a quick spoken version of three sentences for radio and that would keep them happy. But then if you had to do a voicer, had to do a minute and a half to the microphone for radio, you would do that after you had got your film cut. Or if you could fit it in you would do it before.'⁵⁷

BROADCASTING AND THE NEW ZEALAND ACCENT

Alexander's comments do not mention a broadcasting debate that was concluding when he and Maguire joined the NZBC. Should broadcasting journalists be heard or seen on air at all? The screened bulletins were 'read on television', a phrase from the annual report reflecting the initial NZBC approach to television news, by radio announcers. Wear gives the journalists' common understanding: 'We were not considered fit and proper people to have on air. Only in the direst emergency did any of us get to read anything into a microphone.'⁵⁸

When television news began the NZBS stated its criteria for news-readers: 'a high degree of intelligence, natural fluency and a pleasant but in no way distracting appearance'.⁵⁹ Although these requirements did not necessarily disqualify journalists, their real difficulty was the matter of pronunciation. This, as William Willis, a 2YA announcer, notes, was 'geared to imitate the BBC. You lived and breathed correct pronunciation.'⁶⁰ Commercial station announcers also had to achieve the required standards of excellence, as Bas Tubert, among others, recalled.⁶¹ But the pronunciation rules were never applied as strictly on the commercial stations, which accepted their listeners' speech patterns and did not make the same judgements about quality. They headed the change towards the on-air acceptance of the New Zealand accent, and a significant step came with the broadcasting of Barry Crump. Ian Cross, then working for Feltex, bought the rights for a reading of Crump's 1960 book, *A Good Keen Man*, on the Feltex-sponsored commercial radio programme, *This is New Zealand*. Crump's was 'a voice that only New Zealand could produce' but, in spite of its suitability for the book's tales of back-country hunting, it was judged unacceptable and Crump was not permitted to read his own work. But when Feltex purchased the rights to Crump's second book, *Hang on a Minute Mate*, the author was allowed to be its radio reader.⁶² But the NZBC hierarchy saw newsreading as the flagship of its endeavours; there the highest standards would be maintained.

But the BBC style did not translate well to television. Jack Kelleher, the television critic for the *Dominion*, reporting on the first week of transmissions from WNTV1, held that television was no place for 'the NZBS type reared to a tradition of stiff formality'. He wrote of watching one of the first transmissions with members of a youth club in a crowded dance hall: 'The teenagers found the announcer's vowels so remarkable that they mouthed them with him'.⁶³ In his later years, Stringer spoke of being 'appalled by the pronunciation of our announcers and of our journalists in particular'.⁶⁴ He was correct in seeing the changes as spearheaded by the corporation's journalists but his denigration of their pronunciation was a Canute-like refusal to acknowledge the inevitable acceptance of the distinct New Zealand accent and the ousting of received English home-counties

pronunciation. The problem was not peculiar to New Zealand and in some ways this country was quicker than others to accept the changes. When Yorkshireman Austin Mitchell returned to England in the early 1970s after a period in New Zealand as an academic, and after having enjoyed considerable success as a television commentator, he was not acceptable to the BBC because of his provincial accent.⁶⁵

The exclusion of the reporters was impractical and did not last long. Besides, it was undermined by their presence on the filmed local items that appeared in news bulletins. But the debate over pronunciation was as much a debate over what style of broadcasting would rule television: commercial or non-commercial. The result was pre-ordained by the corporation's need for income and the gradual increase of commercial hours. Although there were still non-commercial broadcasting days with their news bulletins, the news service was soon recognised as the corporation's commercial jewel. Its high audience rating meant that to its commercial breaks attracted the highest income and it signalled the start of the night's viewing; much of the audience stayed tuned for the following programmes. Increasingly they listened to announcers who spoke as they did.

VIETNAM

For both news and current affairs programming, coverage of the Vietnam War was the major issue facing the NZBC. It received continuing attention in news bulletins and regular current affairs coverage elsewhere. In mid-1965 Stringer informed one correspondent, 'During the past four months we have broadcast 28 programmes — ranging in length from 7 minutes to 25 minutes — on Vietnam. 18 of these were on radio and 10 on television. Also government and opposition cases are broadcast live in full from Parliament.'⁶⁶ The government had difficulty generally in accepting the NZBC's growing assertion of its role as an independent public broadcaster, but it was the coverage of the Vietnam conflict that brought the NZBC into direct conflict with the government.

Stringer operated under considerable government pressure. Scott, for example, refused on one occasion to sign an authorisation for expenditure on cameras until Stringer reported to him on the presence of television cameras at an anti-Vietnam War demonstration.⁶⁷ Stringer's attitude, which required considerable courage, was that if the government declared war it could, as in World War II, immediately appoint a censor and write the news as it saw fit. Until then it had no right to interfere and should be resisted. Stringer was also subject to strong pressure from within the corporation. He knew that the moment he did censor a piece of news, his own journalists would inform their counterparts from the Wellington newspapers and that he would rapidly lose his credibility.

Pressure over the corporation's Vietnam coverage continued. Stringer had to adapt, had to learn when to use, and more importantly, when not to use the old boy network that was Wellington public life. In March 1966 the director of the Security Intelligence Service (SIS), Brigadier H. E. Gilbert, wrote a personal letter to Stringer (Dear Gil, Dear Bill), in which he argued that 'in the face of a deliberate letter-writing campaign by the anti-Vietnam involvement movement', the Wellington television programme *Your View* and the radio programme *Listeners' Forum* were 'not presenting a fair reflection of public opinion on the issue'. Stringer's reply ignored *Listeners' Forum* but said a decision had been taken to stop *Your View* before Gilbert's letter arrived. He also assured Gilbert that appropriate action would be taken when there was evidence the corporation was being used or when there was an obvious imbalance. Seven months later a further letter, again personal and confidential, from the SIS director regarding the programme *Topic* was returned with a reply from Stringer that he would not take the matter further unless Gilbert removed the personal and confidential qualifications, thus allowing the complaint to be treated openly through the corporation's normal procedures.⁶⁸

There was regular public questioning of the nature of the NZBC's proper role in reporting and commenting on the Vietnam War. Maguire started a considerable debate in May 1965 when he cancelled a radio talk on Vietnam by Professor E. Herd of Otago University scheduled for the *Looking at Ourselves* series. The instructions for the series included the requirement that 'on major issues about which there is considerable public feeling you must be careful to put fairly all significant shades of opinion before drawing your own conclusions'. Maguire regarded Herd's address as strongly putting the professor's view rather than widely examining the issue. He therefore rescheduled the talk in the radio series *Point of View*, where it was broadcast in association with a government statement. Maguire publicly defended his decision when he was interviewed on television's *Right of Reply*. The recognition that Herd's talk was rescheduled rather than banned outright, a matter which had not been well publicised in the press, somewhat softened the criticism of the NZBC, but the disquiet remained that Herd's talk had been moved and was allowed to be broadcast only alongside a government reply.⁶⁹ The corporation asked for this to be included because it interpreted a demand in the legislation 'that the programmes maintain a proper balance in their subject-matter' as requiring that both sides of a debate be heard together.

CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

The Vietnam coverage led the corporation to reconsider its policy on controversial topics. Long banned from the airwaves, such matters were allowed conditionally in the last years of the NZBS and under the NZBC

became subject to the corporation's discretion, in line with the requirements of the legislation. The corporation interpreted its new freedom with trepidation and, in practice, little changed from the NZBS to the NZBC. The continuing problems in this area were well illustrated by the 1959–62 discussion over fluoridation of the Nelson water supply.⁷⁰ The NZBS and then the NZBC were willing and indeed eager for the issue to be aired but on the condition that the two sides be treated equally by broadcasters. This meant more than each receiving equal time. For instance, one side could not give an uninterrupted speech while the other was interviewed. The issue did receive broadcasting time but nowhere near as much as broadcasters wanted. One bone of contention concerned how many sides there were. The broadcasters saw a simple dichotomy between pro- and anti-fluoridation views, but for the protagonists there were a number of views. So broadcasters faced the major difficulty of getting pro- and anti-fluoridation groups to go on air at all. Disagreements about whether panel discussions, debates, set speeches or interviews were the appropriate format confused the situation. Because the format had to be agreed before any broadcast could take place, this was not only hard to obtain but also, by requiring it, the broadcaster was in effect giving either side veto power over any broadcast.

Politicians, in particular, quickly learnt the implications of the ruling that opposing points of view be given equal treatment. By refusing to appear or by not accepting any proposed format, either side could prevent a broadcast from taking place. This difficulty bedevilled early NZBC interviewing. Waldo Maguire began to rewrite this section of the corporation manual and the work was completed by his successor, Edward Parkinson. The legislative emphasis on balance was no longer interpreted as being mandatory in each programme. Controversial topics were divided into acute and less acute. For the former, it was 'normally desirable that the opposing views be presented in one programme . . . although in special circumstances the different points of view may be put in a series of broadcast on consecutive days'. For the latter, balance was required 'over a reasonable period of time'.⁷¹ Current affairs producers and their superiors needed courage and determination, especially while new patterns were developed, but the way was now open to discuss a controversial topic, even if one side could not or would not take part. They could be offered their turn the next day.

1966 ELECTION BROADCASTING

After the criticisms of the 1963 election coverage, changes were expected for 1966. Both Stringer and Llewellyn visited Britain in 1964 to study how radio and television dealt with elections there and the board asked Stringer to submit proposals based on a study of BBC practice. Rather than giving decision-making power to the prime minister, Stringer reported that the

BBC 'held the complete initiative throughout the whole of the campaign'. The board discussed election coverage at its August 1965 meeting, but decided to defer a decision until May or June 1966. This was reconsidered the following February when the minister told Stringer that time was running out. In March Stringer presented his election coverage proposals to the board, who instructed him to present them to the minister and, if he agreed, then discuss them with the prime minister and the Labour and Social Credit leaders.⁷²

The major change from 1963 was that, in 1966, the corporation, not the prime minister, would determine the total time available and how this would be divided among the parties. In effect, however, the party leaders were given a veto power. This was most apparent in the rejection of Stringer's suggestion that the election broadcasts include all parliamentary candidates giving a five-minute radio address from their local station. This was acceptable to National and Social Credit but was dropped after strong objections from Labour's Norman Kirk that the proposal would allow Communist candidates access to the microphone.⁷³

There were two new programmes for the 1966 election: *Election Forum* and *Question Time*. Both modelled on BBC originals, these were 30-minute programmes designed for television but with the soundtracks also carried on radio. The NZBC did not follow Britain's example completely. It did not adopt the BBC programme, *Election Gallery*, an analysis of the conduct of the campaign, which screened twice weekly during the British election period; Maguire felt it was 'much too tough for New Zealand at present'. *Election Gallery* 'included some fine election documentary . . . rawish revealing stuff' which New Zealand politicians could not take and NZBC producers could not produce. 'The Parties would scream.'⁷⁴

In *Election Forum* the leaders of National, Labour and Social Credit appeared separately and were interviewed by a panel of three journalists, Graham Billing, Ian Cross and Noel Harrison with Ian Johnstone in the chair. So there were three programmes played over the four television stations and the YA and YZ radio stations. Questions were invited from the public and selected by the corporation with the assistance of Professor Ralph Brookes of Victoria University. The questions were shown to the party leaders in advance. *Question Time* was a regional programme in which candidates, chosen by their parties, appeared together on the one programme. Their questioners were members of the public chosen by the NZBC and they did not see the questions ahead. There were eight programmes in all, two from each of the four main centres.

The rest of the radio broadcasts were a repetition of previous practice. There were 23 broadcasts shared among National, Labour and Social Credit, with the first two parties receiving equal time and Social Credit considerably less. There were now 500,000 licensed television sets in New Zealand as opposed to 138,000 in 1963, so television figured more promi-

nently than in the previous election. Apart from *Election Forum* and *Question Time*, National and Labour were given a total of 50 minutes and Social Credit 20 minutes to use as they wished. Each party approached separate NZBC employees asking them to train their candidates in camera appearance and television techniques. Stringer refused to let his staff do this work until, at the end of June, he changed his mind and allowed it as long as all training was finished by the end of August.⁷⁵

For the first time, political parties approached the corporation asking to buy broadcasting time for additional election broadcasts. Stringer refused: this had never been permitted in New Zealand, where politics — and religion — had always been considered outside the range of normal commercial activity.⁷⁶ The NZBC repeated its earlier practice of having no political content in its broadcasts other than the approved election schedule and in the regular news bulletins. The board at first decreed that, apart from this schedule, no candidate could broadcast from the time of their selection until after the election. This presented considerable difficulties and the following month, the ban was changed to cover the period from the start of September to the end of the election.⁷⁷ The corporation's own programming schedule was greatly altered. It considered *Looking at Ourselves*, *Lookout*, *Compass*, *Topic* and *Point of View* to be controversial programmes and, apart from *Point of View*, discontinued them from mid-October until after the election. *Point of View* was allowed to continue, as long as no political matters were discussed. Stations were ordered to withhold all local programmes of a similar nature and to ensure that other programmes — the local and national women's programmes were especially mentioned — eliminated any political content.⁷⁸

For the first time, too, the corporation sent journalists on the campaign trail. Two parliamentary reporters were sent, one with the National and one with the Labour leaders for the first and last weeks of the campaign. Parkinson, the controller of news and public affairs, applauded the innovation and felt it produced 'gratifying results'.

There were election night broadcasts on both radio and television. As for previous elections, the National Programme was devoted entirely to election coverage and, in another first, from 8pm to 9.45pm the four television stations also broadcast the results as they came to hand. Again commercials were not broadcast from 7pm on either television or the commercial radio stations, except for the YD stations which continued with their normal programmes.

The 1966 election broadcasts attracted more praise than complaints. The television questioning of politicians, especially, was seen as worthwhile and the presentation of the results as speedy and efficient. It was clear now that New Zealanders turned to radio, and especially television, rather than newspapers for election night news. Scott, the minister, sent his congratulations for a 'tremendous job well done'. The corporation itself,

however, saw much room for improvement. Radio executives realised they had been outdone by their television counterparts. Radio 'lagged badly' behind television in the presentation of results. There were two reasons for this. First, the presentation of the news and weather from 9pm to 9.18pm, just as the flow of results was strongest, meant a considerable backlog built up. Second, the radio executives were forced to accept that their announcing requirements added to their difficulties: the 'style of announcement was too cumbersome and slow'. There was no action yet, but a change to radio's formal presentation was considered. Parkinson added to the internal brickbats. Although generally happy with the *Election Forum* programmes, he questioned whether it was 'necessary or advisable' to show the leaders the questions in advance: they should be 'as competent as their lesser brethren in *Question Time* in answering questions cold'. He also argued against the cancellation of all current affairs programmes during the campaign, pointing out that there was no programme in which election issues could be discussed. For the next election he suggested either retaining at least one programme or starting a special programme.⁷⁹ Parkinson's criticisms were essentially the same as those made after the 1963 election, that the corporation lacked the courage to seize the independence offered in the act and that, rather than being concerned with the information needs of its audience, it was far too willing to bow to the real and the imagined concerns of politicians.

TOWN AND AROUND

The NZBC was very much in need of a television programme that could act as a training ground for an entire cadre of producers, directors, interviewers and researchers, but would also appeal to the audience. Martin succeeded magnificently in both these aims when he introduced *Town and Around* in November 1965. In this half-hour programme made up of a range of material a studio host both presented items and introduced others from members of a reporting team. The programme was produced separately at each of the four stations and was screened each weeknight after the main evening news bulletin. It began in Wellington as a month-long experiment but was quickly adopted at the other stations. The programmes ran for five years before being shortened and then stopped once the national network was in place. In those years the four *Town and Around* editions became, in their centres, much-loved expressions of local identity and New Zealand's major example of local television. But local television was always only a partial success. It was adequate in the four television cities but was never approached, let alone achieved, for the rest of the country. The problem was that each of the four stations had too big a geographical spread to be able to act as local stations. The difficulties were greatest for WNTV1 which covered an area stretching from Kaikoura and



John Shrapnell, reporter, Barry Lissette, cameraman, and Peter James, sound recordist, at a *Town and Around* interview in a Wellington region nudist colony.

South Westland to Gisborne and New Plymouth; it could not even act adequately as a regional station. CHTV3 was the most successful as a local station because the channel's signal was confined to the Canterbury area.

Although it often contained newsworthy items, *Town and Around* was not a news programme. Each night it screened a variety of items, ranging from slapstick to serious interviews, all dealing in some way with matters of local interest. The programmes succeeded in breaking away from the formality that had governed broadcasting and were major factors in the start of a distinctly indigenous approach to television, essentially light-hearted but with an ability to switch rapidly between the frivolous and the serious. Many involved, particularly those on screen, became well-known local personalities and within a year the programme had climbed to the top of the ratings in the four main centres.

Because the *Town and Around* teams did not face the pressure that operated for national programmes, they could experiment and the audience would forgive and accept mistakes. At the same time, though, the public was quick to signal what it did and did not enjoy. *Town and Around* was, therefore, an ideal apprenticeship for the inexperienced New Zealand broadcasters, a forum in which they could learn their craft and develop individual approaches to broadcasting. A large number of broadcasters were involved over the five years in the separate editions of *Town and Around* and many continued in New Zealand broadcasting, rising to



Fred Barnes, rural broadcaster, at work. NZMA

senior positions. As one commentator has noted, the programme 'provided the broad foundation on which New Zealand television was based for the next twenty years'.⁸⁰

COUNTRY CALENDAR

Town and Around was followed soon after by *Country Calendar*, a half-hour programme screening in Sunday evening primetime. It began on 6 March 1966 and, at the time of writing more than 30 years later, continues to command an impressive audience. Other than the news, it is New Zealand's longest running television programme by far and a phenomenon in its own right. The programme began as a digest of rural news, studio interviews and filmed items but gradually assumed its long-running form of documentaries on farming and the rural way of life. The programme capitalised on the less formal presentation introduced by *Town and Around* and added its own style of genial, rural relaxation that made Fred Barnes, the programme's presenter to 1970, a nationally popular television personality. Over the years the programme's directors and camera operators have taken full advantage of the New Zealand countryside and regularly produce work that is not only informative but also of great beauty.

Country Calendar struck a responsive chord. By 1966 New Zealand was a largely urban society and has become even more so in the decades

since. But rural life remains both the economic pivot of New Zealand and the highly regarded mythical source of the 'real' New Zealand. *Country Calendar*, always popular among the rural audience, appeals equally to those in the cities.

MEDICAL PROGRAMMES

Starting in 1966 the NZBC screened an annual series of programmes, usually six in a series, for the New Zealand Post Graduate Medical Federation (NZPGMF). Not part of the regular schedule, the programmes were screened after normal transmission, usually at 11pm. Most of the films originated from Scottish Television and they were obtained for the NZPGMF by Global, the corporation's agent in London. They included such topics as epilepsy in childhood, intra-uterine growth, depression and alcoholism, atrial septal defects, bio-engineering and rubella in pregnancy. After the first two series the federation asked for 'at least one' New Zealand-made programme and suggested it involve the Greenlane cardiac surgery group. The corporation was not prepared to do this and wondered whether the series itself should continue.⁸¹ Having conducted annual surveys of its members, the NZPGMF found the series were widely supported by the profession and watched by a high proportion of general practitioners. The corporation was not concerned about this but changed its attitude when the audience surveys indicated the programmes also received 'a surprisingly high popularity rating from the general public'. In spite of the time they were shown, they were among the 20 most popular programmes.⁸² It was an intriguing lesson for the NZBC's programmers. The series continued until 1973 but then ceased when the 1974 season was cancelled because suitable films could not be obtained.⁸³

DRAMA

Town and Around was a hugely influential corporation training ground but not all areas of broadcasting received a similar impetus. Television drama especially suffered from neglect. Roy Melford, a television producer, attended a session run by Gilbert Stringer in 1960 in which 'the key thing I remember is he turned to me and said, "One thing, Roy. We won't be doing any drama for five years."' That was an instant challenge to me to prove him wrong.' Melford did produce Alfred (Al) Flett's *All Earth to Love* three years later, easily beating Stringer's estimate. But Stringer's remark does indicate drama's position in the NZBC's priorities. There were television drama productions in those early years, but they were the exceptions; in NZBC policy New Zealand television drama was still inappropriate. The available facilities were scarcely adequate and the spending priorities were focused on extending television coverage and building the

news service. The NZBC felt it could not afford the relatively expensive luxury of its own drama productions.

New Zealand drama had not been greatly favoured in pre-television broadcasting. As Melford noted, 'Under Bernard Beeby's regime [Beeby was the NZBS drama producer] we didn't do many New Zealand plays. . . . We did three in one year which was an improvement on the year before.'⁸⁴ This was not a matter of personal preference on Beeby's part. He was continuing a pattern started by James Shelley, who saw cultural elevation as the primary purpose of broadcasting, using mostly overseas — particularly British or 'home' — material and expertise. (When the Symphony Orchestra was formed Shelley sought to employ as few New Zealanders as possible.)⁸⁵ With Beeby's retirement there was a reconsideration of radio drama. William Austin, appointed chief producer in 1960, oversaw 'a vigorous drive to bring New Zealand written drama regularly to the microphone' and, 18 months into his new position, reported that New Zealand plays were being broadcast on an average of one a month.⁸⁶

With television, however, cost was a big problem. In television, unlike radio, drama is among the more expensive productions. Overseas-produced television dramas were available in New Zealand as part of the general set price for programme agreement which represented a fraction of the actual cost of production, so it was far cheaper to import programmes than to produce them at home. Accordingly, the advocates for local drama believed that what New Zealand production there was should ignore overseas plays and concentrate on homegrown material. Melford noted, 'The one product we could not buy from overseas was plays or programmes about New Zealand. So therefore that is where we had to concentrate.'⁸⁷ The desire among producers such as Melford was clear, but they needed Stringer's permission to proceed.

Bruce Mason was the first New Zealand playwright to have his work televised. The BBC had produced *The Pohutukawa Tree* some years before television began in New Zealand and he was also the first to be televised here when his solo version of *The End of the Golden Weather* was filmed in 1961. The next attempt at New Zealand television drama was an Auckland filming of Frank Sargeson's *A Time For Sowing*, then being performed by an amateur cast in the City Art Gallery. The actors performed the play in the Shortland Street studios, where it was filmed, but the recording was done with newly arrived video equipment and ruined by inexperience and over-confidence. The American suppliers had suggested sending an engineer down to show the Auckland technical staff how to operate the machine but were told that would not be necessary. The operation was not perfected, however, until this happened and in the meantime, much to the author's annoyance, the first recording of Sargeson's play was ruined and never appeared on television.⁸⁸

Al Fleet's *All Earth to Love*, produced by Roy Melford and screened in

May 1963, was the first New Zealand drama produced and screened by the NZBC. Set in a railway refreshment room and known colloquially as *Passionate Paekak*, the play dealt with a chance encounter of two travellers, played by Alan Jarvis and Pamela James. Melford gave his 'old boss', NZBS drama doyen Beeby, a non-speaking role going to that part of the counter labelled 'For aged people and amputees'. The play was generally well received, with much emphasis laid on the realism of the New Zealand setting. The distinctive railway crockery was lovingly filmed and the screening was delayed for some weeks to allow the new diesel locomotive shown in the opening to actually come into service. Pat Evison, serving behind the counter in the play, voiced the general delight of the New Zealand acting fraternity and hoped that television would join radio as a second work opportunity. 'We all felt it might even be possible someday to earn a living in New Zealand as an actor.'⁸⁹ There was no rush to continue with drama production. The play fully stretched the NZBC's capabilities. The limitations of the Waring Taylor Street studio required considerable rewriting of the script, but the chief difficulty was the inability to record the play in parts so that the entire production, which ran for some 25 minutes, had to be filmed in one take. Post-production facilities were also minimal and all sound effects, such as trains running by and other station noises, had to be entered and properly balanced during the one-take filming.

The following month CHTV3 recorded its first drama when Phil Wilbraham produced Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. It was performed by the Christchurch Repertory whose stage production had closed a week before. Again there were considerable problems, particularly with the CHTV3 facilities, and the original production had to be greatly adapted to hold the comedy within the confines of the 18-foot by 18-foot studio.⁹⁰ Such difficulties confirmed Stringer in his decision not to accelerate the development of drama.

It was not until 1965, after Alan Morris became chief producer and Brian Bell had returned to New Zealand and been recruited to the NZBC, that Stringer decided the corporation was ready for a further attempt at drama. Bell was another of the few New Zealanders with a background in television. His interests were in the theatre and he had television experience with BBC drama, a position he had accepted partly to help him return home. 'I wanted to come back to New Zealand but at that time there was no theatre. But television was starting,' Morris, with a brief to get something going, sent Bell to Dunedin, Christchurch and Wellington for short periods as supervising producer. Bell's initial New Zealand endeavours were in general production but in 1966, in Wellington, he organised a television drama seminar series in which 20 actors and five producers took part. As a result, Douglas Drury produced *Down By the Cool Sea*, a play commissioned from Maurice Shadbolt, and Alex Toogood produced Jean Hill's *Anniversary Day*. The real challenge for Bell, however,

was to establish drama production on a regular basis and a preliminary step towards this came in 1967 when he gained permission to hold a series of workshops. These were held for 170 actors chosen from over 400 applicants and five plays were commissioned. The requirements were specific: big cast plays for the many actors from the workshops, and indigenous drama rather than adaptations of overseas examples.

Bell produced two of the five plays, Ian Cross's *Momma's Good Girl*, and Ngaio Marsh's *Slipknot*. Chris Thomson produced Warren Dibble's *Double Exposure* and Rosaline Goldring's *Game for Five Players*. The fifth play was Peter Bland's *The Tired Man*, produced by Douglas Drury. Bell regarded the results as 'preliminary efforts . . . of mixed quality', but he was satisfied in that, for local television drama to be established and accepted, several years of similar work were required. In 1968 he prepared for a further eight plays and a six-part series.

At this point Bell lost support for a commitment to drama. The critical reaction to the 1967 plays was harsh; as Bell said, 'Nothing prepared me for the newspaper reaction.' He regarded the criticism as an example of 'the colonial cringe', condemning the New Zealand productions for being of lower quality than their imported equivalents. The real problem, and the tragedy for New Zealand television drama, was not so much a colonial acceptance of the foreign as necessarily better, as the late acceptance of indigenous drama as one of the NZBC's proper and normal television activities. Like other areas of television production, drama made the slow climb to sophistication, but by 1967 the New Zealand audience had some years of viewing experience and was no longer willing to endure and enjoy drama's first, naive steps. Bell was ready to withstand the criticism and set out on the learning curve, but his superiors were not. Bell was told 'We should take it slowly step by step. . . . Before it had been step by step and nothing really had been achieved. The essence of television around the world is that you establish a commitment and the commitment itself then allows things to happen . . . This is what we were after and this is exactly what we didn't get.'⁹¹ Dispirited, Bell resigned and moved to Sydney to take up a position with the ABC.

It was not the end of television drama. Of Bell's 1968 plans Douglas Drury produced Alex Guyan's *A Joker in the Pack* and Hugh Leonard's *Do You Play Requests*, and the six-part series *The Alpha Plan* was produced by Chris Thomson. These had to wait to 1969 for a screening and in that year they were joined by Julian Dickson's *Green Gin Sunset*, also produced by Thomson. The decade ended with attention still focused on a piecemeal approach and no acceptance of a continuing focus on New Zealand television drama. Indigenous television drama had made its appearance with the NZBC but the major dramatic achievement of the decade was the establishment of Wellington's Downstage, the country's first professional theatre. In broadcasting, the strength of drama still rested very much with radio.

SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

In 1970 Gilbert Stringer stated that, in the previous eight years, the NZBC had spent \$8 million in support of the arts. Most of this expenditure was required by legislation, as in the financing of the National Orchestra, or required for programming, as in the money spent on artists' fees and scripts. Still this \$1 million per year average was double the Arts Council's budget and, as the *Press* acknowledged, the 'cultural life of the country would be drab indeed without the NZBC'.⁹² But this represented the high point of art assistance. The NZBC found its support was not matched by other bodies. In 1970, for instance, it offered the Auckland Symphonia \$40,000 a year for three years if the orchestra would 'meet the requirements of opera and ballet', which meant touring throughout New Zealand as required, and if the Arts Council and the Auckland local bodies made similar grants. The latter would not assist and the offer lapsed. In the 1970s the corporation's worsening finances meant it was unable to continue its previous level of activity or assistance. The Christchurch drama studios were closed in 1972, an action the Canterbury branch of Actors' Equity challenged as 'inevitably reducing the number of competent actors in Christchurch', though the fact that there were only three full-time actors in the city at the time did indicate the reduction had already begun.⁹³ That year the regional orchestras in Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin were given NZBC grants totalling \$37,500 but the corporation announced these were the last, blaming rising costs and the drop in revenue after the introduction of private radio.⁹⁴

PRIVATE BROADCASTING

Although the 1961 Broadcasting Act allowed the establishment of private broadcasting stations for the first time since the 1930s, the NZBC soon showed it had little regard for these and would not permit them. The corporation received its first application for a licence to run a private radio station in November 1962. It came from the Auckland-based committee for the promotion of a Christian broadcasting station. After referring the application to its central religious advisory committee, the corporation replied that it 'did not feel able at this juncture' to grant the application.⁹⁵ It had been religious broadcasting, particularly the radio churches, that had led the earlier private stations and the NZBC was not prepared to risk this happening a second time. This refusal of private religious broadcasting was made more significant by the ending, in December 1962, of *The Friendly Road Service of Song*, the last remnant of the Radio Church of the Friendly Road. The programme was not allowed to continue after the retirement of its conductor and major personality, Tom Garland. The Friendly Road, the main radio church, had been allowed, under all gov-

ernments since the 1930s, to continue broadcasting a weekly choir programme. The NZBC, once it was able to make its own decisions, took the opportunity to end the broadcasts of what had been its greatest rival.

The ending of the Friendly Road programme broke one of the three final links with the first era of private broadcasting in New Zealand. A second link was broken the next year with the death of Percy Stevens, owner of Gisborne's 2ZM (later 2XM), and, despite local desire and willingness to keep the station on the air, it closed. The one surviving link was the Dunedin station, 4XD.

The second application came in June 1963, again from the Auckland area, this time to run an FM radio station. The applicant was reminded of a previously announced policy statement that there was 'no justification for such an innovation in the foreseeable future, high quality reception being available from the present amplitude modulation systems'.⁹⁶ The third application, in September 1963, was the first for a television licence. It was from Gordon Dryden Limited, and was again to operate a station in Auckland. Dryden was a persistent applicant but his first attempt was quickly rebuffed. The corporation replied that its first aim was to provide television coverage over the whole country and that its own planning included an alternative programme to be introduced at the appropriate time. There were further applications for radio licences in Auckland, Hamilton, Tokoroa, Hawke's Bay and Christchurch, and for a television licence in Christchurch. A total of 10 had been received by the time Radio Hauraki announced its pirate plans in 1966. The NZBC usually replied that current radio and television services were adequate and that it did not intend to undertake surveys to implement Part III of the Broadcasting Act.

Anyone might apply for a licence but the legislation was clear that applications would not be considered unless first called for by the NZBC which was, 'from time to time', to conduct surveys to determine the adequacy of its own broadcasting services. If it found any locality inadequately served then it was to call for licence applications to remedy the deficiency. But no surveys were held and no inadequacies were found. For television, the corporation had its own plans for second channel coverage but operated under government instruction that these must wait until there was full national coverage for the first channel. The corporation was committed to providing an increasingly expensive coverage to more and more sparsely populated rural areas. It was not going to give up the urban gold mine of a second channel while it had to beat a path to the remote rural areas and it had no intention of inviting applications for a second channel service it was itself not yet permitted to begin. The corporation had to judge the acceptability of the broadcasting plans of its would-be rivals while its own future plans were judged by the government. It is little wonder the NZBC was unwilling to allow others opportunities it was barred from.

Similarly the corporation had its own plans for developments in radio which it would implement as time and finances allowed. Again these were on hold while all available financial resources went into extending television coverage. In the meantime it had no intention of conducting surveys and allowing pronouncements to be made on the adequacy of its radio broadcasting. Even if such surveys had been conducted and applications invited, it is doubtful if private stations would have followed. Any hearings were to be held by the NZBC, which was deemed to be a commission of inquiry for this purpose. So the NZBC was to be the deciding authority concerning both the adequacy of its services and the awarding of licences to would-be competitors. The corporation was at fault: it determinedly ignored the provision in the legislation that allowed private broadcasting. The act, however, was flawed in that it placed the onus of starting private broadcasting on the NZBC, the very organisation least likely to want it. The NZBC's predecessor organisations had strongly resisted private broadcasting since the 1930s; there was no reason to think that the 1961 act would change that attitude.

RADIO HAURAKI

In 1965 plans were laid that led to the dramatic opening of New Zealand's first private radio station since the Labour government had decided, 30 years before, to take broadcasting stations under government control. The main figure was 24-year-old David Gapes, a Wellington-based journalist with *New Zealand Truth*. Although completely lacking broadcasting experience, Gapes did have a listener's experience, gained during a two-year period as a reporter in Sydney, of the varied fare offered in Australia from its dual public and private broadcasting system. He also had the model of European attempts at pirate radio, particularly Radio Caroline broadcasting from the English Channel in challenge to the BBC monopoly. Gapes was convinced that a pirate station in New Zealand could be profitable for its backers. In other countries a format of 'non-stop pop interspersed with brief news spots'⁹⁷ attracted listeners and advertisers but no existing New Zealand station followed this example. The venture might be profitable, but it was clearly full of risk. But Gapes was ready and eager to attempt to change the New Zealand system of broadcasting.

Gapes had no engineering or nautical experience either, and remedied this deficiency by joining forces with Derek O'Callahan, an Auckland radio ham and amateur yachtsman. After the first public mention of their plan, in the *New Zealand Herald* of 9 April 1966, Gapes and O'Callahan were sought out by and joined forces with Derek Lowe and Chris Parkinson, two ex-NZBC employees. Parkinson was a radio announcer and studio technician, while Lowe's experience was in radio production and advertising. The four had complementary skills and became equal partners in a

venture to be called Radio Hauraki. The name was chosen after the obvious decision was made to broadcast to Auckland, the largest population base in the country, and after the discovery that, within the Hauraki Gulf, there was a small area that was technically part of international waters: although surrounded by New Zealand territorial waters, it was more than 3 miles from any shore and therefore international.

Gapes first plan was to begin broadcasting in January 1966 but this 'hopelessly optimistic'⁹⁸ target was abandoned once he joined forces with his partners and they came to grips with the many obstacles in their way and with the tenacity of the bureaucracy that attempted to thwart Radio Hauraki. 'The possible operation of private stations outside New Zealand's territorial waters' was discussed by the NZBC board at its meeting of 19 April 1966, the first after the initial *Herald* report. It decided that any public statements would be made only by the chairman, so Stringer was asked to report on the situation in other countries and to explore the legal position. Two meetings later, he was asked to explore the British legislation outlawing pirate stations there. By July, when four separate organisations had announced they intended to broadcast from ships off the Auckland coast, the board had decided on its course of action. It requested the minister to introduce and pass legislation along the lines being considered in Britain. The board wanted pirate stations outlawed, preferably before any began operating around New Zealand. They phoned the minister immediately with this resolution. The board had three reasons for acting so urgently against the would-be pirate stations: lack of control over programme content, particularly in matters of public interest ranging from indecency to subversion; security and the fear of the establishment of pirate stations for foreign propaganda purposes; and the probability of interference with frequencies and receivers in New Zealand. The board was putting the worst interpretation on the pirates' intentions. All three dangers were possibilities, albeit remote, but the real nature of the board's fear was simply that Radio Hauraki and any other pirate stations threatened the NZBC monopoly and that, if and when they began broadcasting, it would be politically impossible to take them off the air. This attitude was made slightly more obvious at its next meeting when it resolved to inform the minister of the call from the European broadcasting union to all governments to ban pirate stations, which 'would strike at the very stability of broadcasting in this country'.⁹⁹

Radio Hauraki was not applying to start a private station but was sidestepping the legal process. This made the matter one for the minister rather than the NZBC, but for Scott and the government things were not so clear. At a meeting with the board, Scott was diffident about introducing a bill to stop pirate stations. He regarded the British prototype as a warning and not likely to be passed that year, if at all. He did, however, assure the board that the government was determined to prevent pirate

stations and was currently preparing an amendment to the Land and Income Tax Act to make advertising from unlicensed stations not deductible for tax purposes. Although the board greeted this move happily, it did not regard it as the decisive action required. According to the 1961 act, the board was required to 'comply with the general policy of the government of New Zealand with respect to broadcasting'. The interpretation of the phrase might be debated, but the board accepted that it certainly included the government's attitude towards private broadcasting. Until now there had been no difficulty because both government policy and corporation desire were against private broadcasting. In the new circumstances McFarlane felt the government must make a decision and announce whether or not it would allow private stations. Harris argued that if the government would not allow them to be licensed then Part III, which allowed private broadcasting, should be removed from the act.¹⁰⁰

The difficulty was that the government had always been divided on the desirability of private broadcasting and required a tide of supporting public opinion before it could accept a change to the broadcasting status quo. Scott, the Minister of Broadcasting, was also postmaster-general and minister of marine so in all three of his portfolios he had responsibility for the would-be pirates. Ironically for the man who did so much to oppose the pirates, Scott belonged to that section of National which favoured private stations and his personal leanings were increased by the political pressure that came with the mounting public support for Radio Hauraki. More importantly, the events of 1966 moved not just public opinion but also the government to accept that the time for private radio had arrived. It was on 21 November 1966 that Radio Hauraki first broadcast signals from the MV *Tiri*, weak signals that were greatly strengthened within the next few days when the crew set up a new transmitting mast. In the seven months between the *Herald* report and the first Radio Hauraki broadcasts, an extraordinary amount of public anticipation and support was awakened. The government was at first harshly against Radio Hauraki, treating applications from the promoters for everything from marine surveys to radio equipment in an unusually dilatory and unsupportive manner.¹⁰¹ But at the same time those government members, led by Scott, who were in favour of private broadcasting, saw Gapes and his colleagues as the people to bring this to fruition. Their policy was not to allow seaborne pirate radio but to persuade the NZBC to lease time on its stations to private broadcasters. 1YD in Auckland, in particular, was seen as an appropriate station for the Hauraki promoters. They wanted private broadcasting reintroduced gradually, beginning with contracted programmes on the lesser existing NZBC commercial stations.

This plan was unsuccessful. At Scott's request, McFarlane undertook to consider an application from Radio Hauraki to broadcast under contract to the NZBC but also made it clear there would be no haste; 'careful and

lengthy examination' was necessary before a decision could be made.¹⁰² Although ready, albeit grudgingly, to allow private stations if that was the government's wish, the NZBC saw no reason to allow its own station to be commandeered. The corporation moved slowly and its eventual decision was at odds with the minister's request. While acknowledging there was 'an unsatisfied demand for this type of musical entertainment', the board directed Stringer to remedy the deficiency from within the corporation.¹⁰³ Scott had already suggested the NZBC was unwilling to operate Part III of the act, but the corporation refuted this suggestion and, after the board threatened to resign en masse, the minister withdrew and apologised.¹⁰⁴ But Scott did not change his opinion and in 1969 repeated his accusation that 'the NZBC had not carried out its duties under Part III of the Act . . . in practical terms I could not see that any applicant . . . could ever succeed as the legislation then stood'.¹⁰⁵ When, in October 1966, Scott again asked the corporation urgently to consider providing YD programmes by contract, the corporation announced that it was now ready to receive such applications.¹⁰⁶ This readiness, however, was considerably muted by a series of resolutions passed at the next board meeting on 15 November 1966. The corporation argued that though the act allowed it to contract out programmes, it did not empower it to lease station time. It would call for tenders to supply programmes for the YD stations but these would be broadcast only outside the existing 9am to 10pm YD hours. Right up to the time Radio Hauraki began its broadcasts, the corporation's actions thwarted the minister's attempts to find a legal alternative to the would-be pirates' rebellion.

During these manoeuvres the Radio Hauraki promoters advanced their seaborne plans, which were opposed by the Department of Marine. The vessel chosen, the *Tiri*, was a beggar's choice, in poor condition, unused at the time and lacking a current survey certificate. An initial proposal to resurvey the vessel as an unmanned, engineless barge raised further issues regarding safety at sea. But the department moved as slowly as possible and the public increasingly saw its actions as designed to thwart a radio station rather than protect a vessel and crew. Finally, so did the judiciary. After charges in the Auckland Magistrates Court against Gapes, for permitting the vessel to go to sea in defiance of a detention order from the Department of Marine, were dismissed, official opposition decreased, the Cabinet deciding enough was enough. Said Scott, 'The department and I were told just to leave them alone.'¹⁰⁷

The public support for Radio Hauraki, even before the station had begun broadcasting, was obvious and was exploited by the promoters. As the Friendly Road had done in the 1930s, the Radio Hauraki directors called a public meeting and filled the Auckland Town Hall with supporters. The 1966 general election campaign was under way and when Prime Minister Keith Holyoake was faced at an election meeting, also in the

Auckland Town Hall, by a crowd derisive of his party's broadcasting record, he departed from his prepared notes and signalled a change of heart. 'I like pirates,' he said, 'I think you all do.' As with the private broadcasting of three decades before, New Zealanders showed an affectionate enthusiasm for an alternative to the established regime and this attitude was something a pragmatic prime minister had to accept. Holyoake also announced at the same meeting that, since the NZBC had failed to license private stations, the government intended to take this power from the corporation and introduce an independent licensing authority to consider such applications.

Holyoake's announcement by no means ended Radio Hauraki's difficulties but from 1967 the government treated the venture without severity. Allegations that, during rough weather, broadcasts sometimes came from the shelter of Great Barrier Island led to some investigation and less action. Scott sat on information that the permanent mooring, from which at least most broadcasts were made, was 2.8 rather than 3 miles from shore and thus not in international waters at all. Official tolerance was offset by nautical hazards. During its 1111 days of broadcasting at sea Radio Hauraki encountered a full range of marine conditions, with broadcasters and crew at times in considerable danger. The *Tiri* suffered many mishaps, some, such as the breaking and loss overboard of its transmitting mast, preventing it from broadcasting, and some endangering the vessel's existence. The *Tiri* was beyond redemption after running aground on Great Barrier Island in January 1968 and a replacement had to be found. The *MV Tiri II* began broadcasting less than a month after its predecessor was silenced. Although it was a more seaworthy vessel, its abilities were greatly tested by the 3-ton, 160-foot, steel transmitting mast it carried. It also encountered dangers. In 1968 it lost its transmitter mast during the great storm of April which, in Wellington, claimed the *Wahine* and, in June, it ran aground on Uretiti Beach south of Whangarei. Broadcasts from the refloated *Tiri II* continued until 1 June 1970, the final day of pirate transmissions from Radio Hauraki, only to be followed later that night by bitter tragedy, the drowning of announcer Rick Grant.¹⁰⁸

The transmission quality of the first broadcasts in late 1966 was soon improved and, early in 1967, began to bear fruit for the station as large national businesses, headed by Coca-Cola, started advertising on Radio Hauraki. But the promoters still faced a hand-to-mouth existence, with the business risks of a new broadcasting venture exacerbated by the continuing costs of nautical life. Pacific Radio Advertising Ltd, the company responsible for the venture, ended the time at sea with a profit of \$5. Financial gain would be possible, if and when the broadcasting was land-based and legal. The real gain for those involved with the sea era of Radio Hauraki was the adventure itself and the increasing realisation that they were challenging and changing the accepted nature of New Zealand's commercial radio

broadcasting and that the audience was welcoming it enthusiastically. Even so, the toll was heavy on the original promoters. Parkinson left in 1967, O'Callahan in 1968 and Lowe shortly before the station came ashore; only Gapes stayed throughout the pirate era. Nevertheless, Radio Hauraki made broadcasting history, entering the country's consciousness not as a radio station, but as a fondly regarded rebel against the conservatism of the government and the corporation. Once broadcasting it became a leading radio station, delivering its promised new style of radio entertainment focused on popular music and, among its targeted audience of young adults, competing well against the NZBC. This was much assisted by the corporation's failure to replicate the Radio Hauraki format.

RADIO i

After Radio Hauraki began, the decision was taken to call tenders from private contractors to provide programming on NZBC stations, in particular Auckland's 1YD. The impetus came from the minister's October 1966 request that the board urgently consider providing pop music programmes from the YD stations by contract under section 14 of the act.¹⁰⁹ As ever, the NZBC was unwilling to allow other broadcasters, first deciding that, in spite of the minister's request, it had no power to lease station time, then calling for tenders by 31 January 1967 to supply programmes from YD stations, but allowing those tenders to lapse without action. International Advertisers Ltd, a firm in which the electronic company Pye Industries was the substantial shareholder, was one of the applicants. In 1967, when fresh tenders were called for, International Advertisers again applied and this time was successful. For \$64,000 a year, Radio i was given the right to broadcast from 1YD for five hours daily, from 6am to 9am and 10pm to midnight. Broadcasts started in September 1967. The firm had lost \$70,000 by the time it began broadcasting and continued to operate at a loss for its first year before it moved into financial profitability. It aimed at an audience slightly older than Radio Hauraki's and described its programming as an 'easy listening Top 60 format' somewhat 'to the right of Top 40'. By the start of 1970 Radio i, broadcasting for five of 1YD's 18 daily hours, held 63 per cent of that station's listeners.¹¹⁰

4

THE FINAL YEARS OF THE NZBC

The arrival of Radio Hauraki signalled the grudging acceptance of private broadcasting in radio. Television was slower to change. The government had been unwilling to accept private broadcasting, but the corporation's reluctance ran deeper. Broadcasting includes the preparation and transmission of programmes and in Labour's 1960 Broadcasting Amendment Act both elements were to be restricted to the state broadcaster. National's 1961 Act, however, the one that was actually implemented, effectively kept transmission as the preserve of the NZBC but allowed others to produce programmes and for these to be purchased and transmitted by the corporation. It was this ability that the corporation neglected. It bought non-New Zealand programmes from others but was reluctant to allow New Zealanders to join it as programme producers. This had many consequences. It meant would-be programme-makers had to be staff members, so many producers existed unhappily under the corporation's control. Willing, indeed eager, to make programmes, they gave their loyalties to such abstract concepts as 'New Zealand programming' rather than to the NZBC. On some issues they were tantamount to a fifth column within the corporation. There were producers outside the corporation but they were restricted in their opportunities. By far the largest area open to them was the production of commercials. For the New Zealand audience there was a considerable disparity between the programmes they watched or listened to and the commercials that accompanied them. Independent producers had a commercial experience and ethos often at odds with that of the NZBC. Rather than co-operating with outside programme-makers, the corporation regarded them as unnecessary and unwanted. The independent and would-be independent producers felt rejected, hindered from following their craft and that New Zealand broadcasting was the poorer for their absence.

AVALON AND TELEVISION PRODUCTION

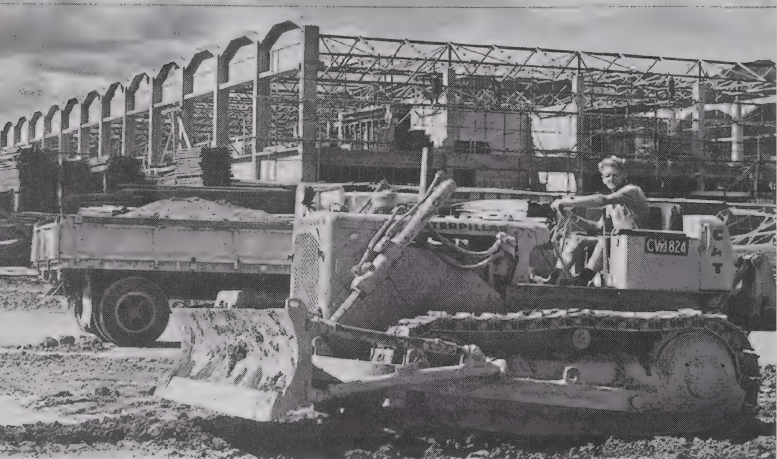
Both the NZBC's desire to control all New Zealand broadcasting and its relationship with the government are nowhere better illustrated than in the

decisions that led to the building of Avalon, New Zealand's television production centre. Avalon is in the Hutt Valley, some 15 kilometres from Parliament and central Wellington. The first mention of the centre in the NZBC files is in June 1962 when the board received a preliminary report from Stringer on 'the new seventeen acre site at Avalon for television studios and other facilities'.¹ It was the beginning of a 13-year saga culminating in 1975 when the almost completed premises were occupied. The building of the facilities was enormously delayed and their eventual use was greatly changed from the original intentions.

To develop, the NZBC needed suitable broadcasting facilities, particularly for television production. The Avalon site was first envisaged as the Wellington radio and television centre rather than the national television production centre. Stringer decided that the Italian television production system was the appropriate model for New Zealand. In Italy facilities were not centralised but divided among the four cities of Milan, Turin, Rome and Naples. Because of the geographical spread of New Zealand's population and the fact that the capital was not the major city, Stringer could see no obvious site for one big production centre. The NZBC originally wanted four studios contributing to a combined national television programme, with each concentrating on a particular specialisation. Educational television was to be centred in Dunedin, light entertainment was to be shared by Auckland and Christchurch and Wellington was to be the base for news and current affairs and the major radio production centre. As Stringer noted, 'That came unstuck in a very simple way. . . . The government said you can have one studio, not four.' The decision, accepted at board and government levels, was that a single and permanent structure at Avalon would be the major television centre for the entire country. 'It was not the right decision though I acquiesced in it,'² said Stringer, but once the four regional production centre proposal was denied, he strongly supported the proposal for the large-scale Avalon complex; it was widely regarded as his monument.

It was NZBC policy that the corporation should be New Zealand's producer and programmer of television content. Stringer was not in favour of other organisations, whether they be publicly owned, such as the NFU, or private and commercial, such as Pacific Films, producing television programmes that would be purchased and screened by the NZBC. The importation of programmes was acceptable but New Zealand programmes were to be made by the corporation: Avalon was a fortress giving expression to this policy, an unfortunate one at best. But by the time Avalon was completed, it housed a style of broadcasting that had moved beyond the confines of Stringer's views.

Stringer later argued that the corporation had wanted to build for the short term. 'The idea [was] that we should build in materials which after a period, say 25 years, could be bulldozed down and replaced with another



Avalon construction, a broadcasting focus and distraction 1962 to 1975.

DOMINION

comparatively temporary structure . . . the big problem in broadcasting is bricks and mortar tend to restrict the production capacities.³ Both artistic vision and future broadcasting innovations would inevitably push the physical limitations of resources. But Stringer advanced this argument well after Avalon was completed and widely regarded as expensive and insufficiently useful.

The Avalon site had the great advantage of being large and flat, and it was cheap. Compulsorily purchased under the Public Works Act but not used for its original purpose, by law the land could not be onsold at more than the compulsory purchase price of £9,700. The major disadvantage of the site was that it was a 20-minute car journey from central Wellington — when the roads were relatively clear, which was by no means usual. This was deplored by broadcasters, used to years in the middle of the city, but was most difficult for news broadcasters, who gathered much of their material in the capital but who had to be based at Avalon because the facilities were there.

The Ministry of Works (MOW) began on working drawings for the facilities in March 1964,⁴ but two years later the corporation decided to dispense with the MOW architectural and structural plans, by then well advanced, and engaged a private firm of architects and engineers to start afresh.⁵ Further delay came from the government, which registered its dis-

pleasure with the NZBC when the Cabinet Works Committee deferred its decision on the building.⁶ It was not until 10 April 1968 that Stringer turned the first sod, initiating the official commencement of work at Avalon.

Throughout the years of planning and building there were many changes to the Avalon proposals. Projected growth in NZBC activities, and in staff numbers, was not well considered and even in the early stages of the project there were complaints that the proposed facilities were far too small. A. W. Martin, the production supervisor, pointed out in February 1964 that the plans provided for only nine producers, a number barely adequate then, let alone in the future. 'If the NZBC aims at a local output of, say 30% on two channels, a not unreasonable figure, then a minimum of 40 producers will be required throughout the country.' And 22 of those were to be based at Avalon.⁷ The NZBC files contain numerous warnings about the need to increase the planned size of the buildings. In late 1969, with the construction well under way, Stringer was reminded that there was still no decision on whether all news and current affairs staff and operations would move to Avalon. This was highly desirable because these needed to be close to the other Avalon facilities, but space was already at a premium. The controller of news estimated he required 6000 square feet. It had been thought one floor, a total of 4500 square feet, would be available for news and current affairs but even that provision was now an 'extremely doubtful prospect'.⁸ When Avalon was completed it was inappropriately large for a fragmented television system but in planning it was barely large enough as the single production centre for the single national television broadcaster.

In the interim the need for the facilities became urgent. The 1962 opening of Broadcasting House relieved the pressure of overcrowding for the NZBC generally, even though it was a radio rather than a television facility. But by the start of 1965 the director of television was telling Stringer that staff growth meant that the head office and Wellington sections were splintered into as many buildings as were occupied before the opening of Broadcasting House.⁹

The emphasis on Avalon and the years of waiting for its construction delayed other broadcasting changes. Preparation for colour television suffered. An experimental colour studio was required but Stringer was reluctant to build it where it could not be turned into a permanent facility.¹⁰ Alternative broadcasting developments were also denied because of Avalon. In 1968 detailed plans were made for an addition to Parliament Buildings, soon dubbed the Beehive once Sir Basil Spence's design was published. The new building would include a studio and the NZBC was offered two choices: either a fully equipped television studio capable of live and videotaped broadcasting or a film interview studio. The corporation chose the second, lesser option, agreeing to equip and operate a film inter-

view studio that would be used extensively for ministerial interviews and parliamentary reports. The first option was rejected principally because it was against the policy 'not to make provision for a television interview studio in Wellington following the commissioning of Avalon'.¹¹

While the delay over Avalon continued, the NZBC continued to struggle with extremely limited studio facilities, as it acknowledged itself in its 1966 report. The result was the very dispersal of production that Avalon was designed to avoid. The corporation began to make exceptions to the policy of concentrating on Avalon. The major alternative development was Studio One, a large sound studio at Auckland's Shortland Street which was converted for television and came into use during 1966. It remained the largest studio until Avalon was commissioned and meant that television production, at least in Auckland, could finally go ahead unhampered by the unusually small size of the room in which it was produced. It also meant that Auckland rapidly assumed a prominence in television production never intended by the NZBC hierarchy. Until the opening of Avalon, Shortland Street was the de facto chief production centre.

Two years later, in July 1968, another new production studio was opened, this time for CHTV3. Built on the site of the CHTV3/3YA carpark, it was the first New Zealand building erected expressly to house a television studio. Its main feature was the 66- by 40-foot studio with a height of 19 feet, big enough for Canterbury television production to escape the strictures of the past.¹²

A third alternative studio was opened in Hamilton on 28 February 1968 when the Waikato town began contributing a six-minute insert to the AKTV2 news bulletin. It was the only time the NZBC extended its television production beyond the four cities. Built on the first floor of Broadcasting House in Hamilton, the studio, with a floor area of 400 square feet, was not large but was well serviced with control, telecine and film processing rooms using a further 2000 square feet of the first floor. Some full programmes, such as a weekly gardening show, were produced in the Hamilton studio but its main role was to make contributions to the AKTV2 news and *Town and Around* programmes.¹³ These, especially *Town and Around*, were ostensibly regional programmes and the building of the Hamilton studio was an admission of and an attempt to redress the difficulty of giving adequate regional coverage.

TELEVISION NETWORKING

Over the coming years the Hamilton studio, as the 1973 Adams report noted, lay 'absurdly and wastefully idle'.¹⁴ The reason was the achievement of television networking and a consequent move away from regional television. Television networking began on Monday 3 November 1969 when all stations broadcast the news programme originating from

WNTV1. Inserts from the other stations were possible as required. It was fitting that the news programme was the first to be networked; the news section had argued particularly hard for its speedy introduction, contending that only networking would make proper national news broadcasts possible. There was an immediate increased national emphasis. From the start of networking the national news segment of the news programme was increased to 15 minutes and local news, *Town and Around* and the magazine section all had to fit within the time previously occupied entirely by *Town and Around*.

National networking had been the aim since the introduction of television and was the major change to television broadcasting since that time. At its start in 1969 the NZBC did not have a fully constituted closed microwave circuit and continued to rely on off-air paths (i.e. picking up and rebroadcasting from programme transmitters) which were susceptible to fading and distortion. Beginning in 1969, these were gradually replaced with microwave links, and these were shortened.

Although WNTV1 was the originating and therefore premier station, this position had its costs. The other stations could abandon the national feed and broadcast local material but, initially, this option was not available to WNTV1. Because the other regions depended on the national signal, WNTV1 always had to carry the network programme. This problem was slowly overcome with further development of the microwave links, which was approved by the board in December 1969.¹⁵

For the audience, networking meant less local programming. There were complaints throughout the country about the shortening of *Town and Around* and the many other smaller changes also caused general dismay. The NZBC did not act on the criticism, calculating correctly that in time the New Zealand audience would grow to accept the new look. National broadcasting in television, as in radio, allowed a concentration on a single programme and a consequent raising of standards. It brought national news and current affairs broadcasts, and live national programming, such as sports telecasts. All these were welcomed but the cost was the repudiation of highly popular local broadcasting. Networking marked the end of the pioneering stage of New Zealand television.

YC PROGRAMME

Although less noticeably than television, over the same time the YC stations were also networked. Programming among the stations had always been co-ordinated. In the 1960s this was extended by scheduling an eight-day repeat cycle of programmes. At first 1YC and 3YC played the same programme on the same days, followed eight days later by 2YC and 4YC. This sequence was reversed in 1966 so that the programme, which originated from Wellington, could be held there as long as possible with, in the

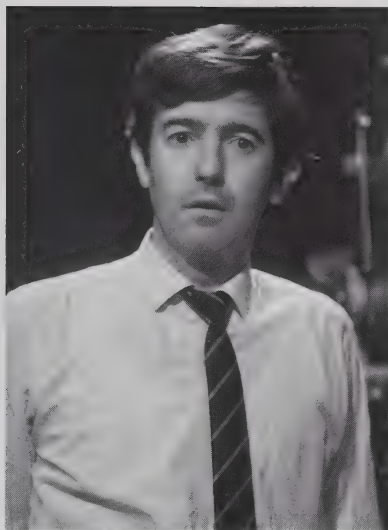
case of 2YC, material delivered as late as the day of transmission. But the 'ultimate aim' was always that the programme be networked, either by having multiple copies of programmes sent to the stations for simultaneous playing or by having the one programme sent to each station by wide-band lines and rebroadcast.¹⁶ The first option was achieved from 8 May 1967 but the second, preferable option was gained three years later. From 1 June 1970 a single and simultaneous programme originating from Wellington was played over the four YC stations.

With networking in place, programming changes were introduced and at the start of the 1970s efforts were made to expand the YC offerings, especially by moving beyond the emphasis on classical music. David Delaney, the editor of spoken features, asked for talks for the YC programme on 'subjects of current concern and interest. Recent and projected programmes, for example, include talks on trade unions in the seventies, Australian politics, Laos, New Zealand and the EEC, defamation and the New Zealand press, Pacific Island peoples, etc...In our programmes there is space to examine factors in more depth than is possible in news and news support programmes At the same time it should continue to fulfill its traditional role of being a forum for many fields of knowledge, literature and the arts, getting rid, however, of any suggestion if it exists of being "academic" and "ivory tower".'¹⁷

A simultaneous programme from all four stations was warmly welcomed and the addition of the various spoken features, such as Delaney had mentioned, sat well with the YC orientation. But, as the alternative non-commercial radio network to the National Programme, the YC stations' incongruous mixture of broadcasting styles exasperated listeners. Broadcasts from Parliament, *Sports Roundup*, classical music and the new spoken programmes all competed for transmission time and over the following years there was much dissatisfaction from those who wanted more of one aspect and less of others.

LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

The 1966 commissioning of Studio One at Shortland Street gave the corporation the facility and the confidence to try large-scale production, first put to the test in 1967 with *C'mon*, which ran for 26 weeks, transmitting live in Auckland on Saturday nights and by videotape from the other centres later. *C'mon* had further series in 1968 and 1969, with the casts also touring New Zealand and, in 1968, Australia. *C'mon* was in the style of *Let's Go* — another popular music show produced by Kevan Moore and fronted by Peter Sinclair — but behind its lightness and youthful exuberance lay a new level of professionalism. The half-year length of the series, coupled with the live transmission, required a disciplined commitment that had not always been present before, and Moore demanded and gained the

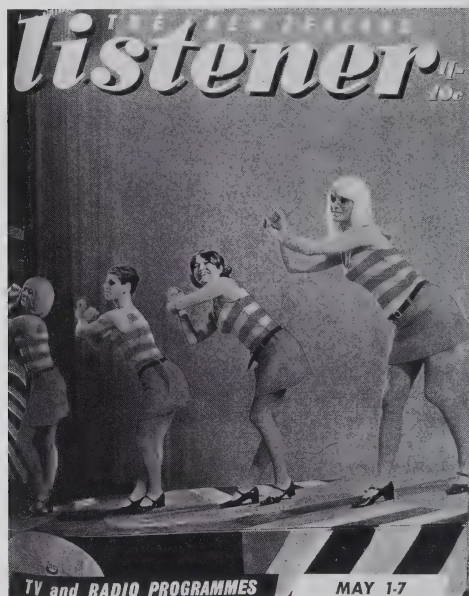


Kevan Moore, producer. NZMA

best from his staff. *C'mon* was the first programme to show that good television production could be made by the NZBC, and that it could be repeated week after week.

C'mon was also significant in that, followed closely by other light entertainment programmes, it expanded the boundaries of what was deemed acceptable in broadcasting. The area of light entertainment that Moore had identified as safe and therefore uncensored in the early 1960s was subjected to but survived much scrutiny in the second half of the decade. Particularly at issue was any expression of sexuality. Stringer's refusal to allow the corporation to lead public taste effectively meant that the NZBC was well behind any shift in social attitudes. Stringer had definite and conservative standards on proper sexual conduct and he applied these to NZBC employees. 'We did things in the 60s which we couldn't do now,' he stated in 1985. 'If a girl got pregnant she was dismissed. The man on the staff who made her pregnant, he was dismissed.'¹⁸ The 'family' that was broadcasting had its outcasts.

Stringer's standards, well known within the corporation, also informed programme choice. But New Zealand, and much of the rest of the world, was undergoing a profound change in sexual attitudes as part and parcel of the growing and general freedom of expression in the 1960s, and broadcasting could not reflect this by standing still. Sexuality became more



C'mon's go-go dancers on the cover of the *Listener*. NZMA

openly acknowledged and part of popular music and this change could no longer be excluded from the NZBC's light entertainment. That this area of programming did move away from Stringer's defining conservatism showed a growing maturity within the corporation.

The change was first obvious in the 1967 series of *C'mon*. As always song lyrics were carefully chosen so they were not overtly sexual; in Ray Columbus's words, 'Songs had to be clean lyrically or at least subtle.' But the presentation of the songs altered dramatically. Moore ignored Stringer's standards — no 'women in low neck dresses'¹⁹ — and the 1967 *C'mon* reflected the fashions of the time. The dancers, Ray Columbus recalled, wore 'the micro mini skirts and the low-cut tops. . . . The dance was really exciting. It was sexy. The go-go girls looked sensational.'²⁰

The corporation made a great number of light entertainment musical programmes in the second half of the 1960s, not only in Auckland, with its large new studio, but also in the three other centres. These programmes were not classically oriented: the NZBC's television productions were designed to appeal to its majority audience. Country music benefited here; it had always been very popular in New Zealand but until now had been

ignored within broadcasting. This changed with 1967's *Western*, which was followed, in the two subsequent years, by *The Country Touch*.

At the end of 1969, with growing confidence, the corporation moved into comedy with the weekly series *In View of the Circumstances*. Produced in Wellington by Terry Bryan from the pens of Roger Hall and Joseph Musaphia, the series made use of the theatrical talent available in the capital. The programmes relied heavily on the format of university capping reviews, the major comedy tradition available in the country. Although not a particularly satirical series, it finally focused television entertainment on comedy, and on comedy that concentrated on the foibles of New Zealanders and on events taking place here. It was evidence that the NZBC was maturing and learning to act as an independent broadcaster.

NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

In the late 1960s NZBC journalism, too, attained the stature and the courage of independence. It was a needed change. Pamela Cunninghame, television columnist for the *New Zealand Herald*, commented in 1969, 'I am no longer entranced with stories about the quality of water flowing from the parish pump and I have ceased to enjoy cosy chats with inarticulate collectors of matchbox tops.'²¹ She described NZBC current affairs programming as 'Yawnsville' and contributed to a developing criticism that came to see the current affairs interviewing style of television's first years as subservient to rather than respectful of authority. Change within the NZBC came gradually as younger members, who had joined the corporation either as journalists or as television broadcasters, gained sufficient experience and status to produce the independent journalism that is one of the great hallmarks of public broadcasting.

A major change came with the realisation that politicians should be treated like any other interviewee and not be allowed to dictate their interviews. As Ian Johnstone notes, 'Gradually we developed that he [the prime minister] wasn't shown the questions beforehand, that the interview was taken at first take.'²² Politicians' final and grudging acceptance of this change can be dated to 1968, when defence minister David Thomson refused to be interviewed on *Checkpoint* about New Zealand's role in South East Asia because the interviewer, George Andrews, would not give him the questions in advance. Andrews refused to do so because it 'would inhibit the discussion which is required to be on an "ebb and flow" basis'. Thomson complained to his colleague Lance Adams-Schneider, the minister of broadcasting, that without prior knowledge of the questions the interviewee was 'at a distinct disadvantage'. Adams-Schneider, however, refused to intervene on the grounds it was a matter for the NZBC, not the minister and he left Thomson to his fate, noting that Andrews was simply following procedures 'well-established and observed by news media both



Des Monaghan. NZMA

in New Zealand and elsewhere'. The minister suggested that supplying questions in advance belonged to the early days of television when interviewees 'were unfamiliar with the medium and consequently at a disadvantage by comparison with the interviewer'. Both Andrews and Adams-Schneider carefully skirted around the main point that politicians no longer had the power to demand easy treatment. During the 1960s interviewees, especially elected representatives, had to learn to be on their mettle when involved in current affairs broadcasting.²³

A similar change took place in television current affairs. In 1968 *Gallery* replaced *Compass* as the corporation's main current affairs programme. *Listener* editor Monte Holcroft regarded NZBC current affairs programming as 'suddenly coming of age' when Brian Edwards became the lead interviewer for the programme.²⁴ But the credit should go at least equally to producer Des Monaghan, who moved to *Gallery* after a period producing *Town and Around* at CHTV3. Robert Muldoon, then minister of finance, regarded Monaghan as the key to the success of *Gallery*.²⁵ Edwards was a former University of Canterbury lecturer who had joined the Christchurch *Town and Around* team before going to *Compass* in 1968 and then to *Gallery*. Monaghan, a Londoner who migrated to New Zealand in 1964 with the express purpose of joining the NZBC, was a



Brian Edwards. NZMA

director then producer with CHTV3's *Town and Around* before promotion to Wellington and *Gallery*. In Christchurch Edwards had accepted, unhappily, Monaghan's gradual shifting of CHTV3's *Town and Around* towards an issues and regional current affairs focus. In Wellington, with the nationally shown *Gallery*, Monaghan encouraged Edwards to adopt, for the first time in New Zealand, the persona of the assertive, even aggressive interviewer. For Holcroft, from this point the NZBC hierarchy was 'a timid charioteer trying to drive a bunch of fiery steeds, moving in all directions'.²⁶ Monaghan, Edwards and their colleagues were willing and able to refocus broadcasting journalism. During these years the style of current affairs reporting broke decisively with the past.

The changes were not received happily in political circles. Corporation officials had much experience of contact from politicians endeavouring to influence NZBC journalism and this pressure increased. In one of many instances, Coury was rung at his home in June 1968 by National's Robert Muldoon who complained that that night's television news bulletin was unfair and politically one-sided. Muldoon said it was well known that Coury was a Labour supporter. Coury's career, which went back to being on the staff of the *Radio Record*, had included three years as press secretary to Labour prime minister Walter Nash, but National politicians had not

complained at the time of his NZBC appointment and their leader, Keith Holyoake, had expressed his confidence in Coury's ability to be objective. Coury told Muldoon in no uncertain terms that his editorial decisions were motivated by newsworthiness rather than political considerations. The conversation ended politely but it was another reminder of the political surveillance of the NZBC and of government willingness to lean on corporation officials.²⁷ It was not only the senior officials who received complaints. David Edmunds, speaking in 1985 after more than two decades in television journalism, noted he had had conversations 'not always pleasant with all the prime ministers since Walter Nash' and considered it 'a form of pressure when somebody as important in the community as the prime minister gets onto a humble news editor'.²⁸ From the late 1960s, though, there was a fresh willingness and strength to resist such interference.

The corporation showed a greater readiness to abide by the principles of journalism, even if that meant a retreat from its earlier willingness to co-operate with other government agencies. For example, in mid-1970 Guy Powles, the ombudsman, asked the NZBC to supply him with offcuts from the news clip of protest demonstrations recorded at Auckland earlier in the year. Seats did not refuse outright but indicated that some 'very deep rooted principles' were involved and made it clear he would be most reluctant to have the matter taken further. Powles backed away and said he would not press the request further.²⁹

An intriguing episode that demonstrated how much current affairs programming had entered the political life of the nation was the Brian Edwards *Gallery* interview with Postmaster-General Allan McCready and Post Office Association leader Ivan Reddish on 8 September 1970. The two men were the principals on the opposing sides of a dispute that included Post Office employees taking go-slow action. In the interview the pair resolved some of their differences and Reddish agreed to call off the go-slow. Subsequently Edwards and *Gallery* received much credit for solving the dispute on screen. Later statements indicated that the dispute was settled many hours before the *Gallery* programme but not made public so that it could be announced dramatically during the interview. Bill Alexander, the corporation's industrial news reporter, knew but yielded to the pressure from Reddish and McCready to not report the settlement; he accepted the prevailing view that reporters had a duty to be helpful in industrial disputes. Edwards, the interviewer, argued he had no prior knowledge.³⁰ Although there are some differences in the recollections of those involved, they all reveal an acceptance of television as the appropriate arena in which to play out the nation's public affairs.

The strength of the broadcasting establishment and the need for even ministers to tread warily when in conflict with it were shown dramatically in May 1971. In an interview with the NZPA in Saigon, David Thomson,

minister of defence, accused the NZBC of a 'lack of integrity' in its television presentation of the Vietnam War. He called this 'distortion' and said the corporation was showing 'scurrilous anti-Vietnam film'. Walter McKinnon, then corporation chairman, pointed out that, with very few exceptions, the NZBC did not itself film or record combat activity in Vietnam. What was shown in New Zealand was seen in many other countries and filmed largely by Visnews, NBC and CBS, all reputable international agencies. He invited Thomson to appear on *Gallery*, where he was interviewed by David Exel. Even before his *Gallery* appearance, Thomson's views were regarded with scant respect; the *Waikato Times*, for instance, said his attack 'would have been amusing were it not so pathetic'.³¹ Thomson in effect withdrew his major accusation during the interview by stating that, for him, a lack of integrity meant not dishonesty but that the picture was wanting. McKinnon called this 'a meaning of integrity not in common use' and said the accusations 'were evaporated'.³² As the *Christchurch Star* noted, Thomson's *Gallery* performance 'neither proved his allegations nor enhanced his stature'.³³

This new orientation was also shown in the corporation's attitude towards election broadcasting: the 1969 and 1972 elections were treated with considerably less circumspection than in the past. Along with the broadcasting of political addresses and the announcement of results on election night, the NZBC also repeated television's *Election Forum*. In 1969 this consisted of three half-hour television programmes which featured, separately, the leaders of Labour, National and Social Credit answering questions solicited from the public. Most importantly, the corporation plucked up its courage and gave its own analyses. Current affairs programmes continued throughout the campaign and were oriented towards the election. On radio, *Looking at Ourselves* was retitled *Looking at the Election* and became a weekly campaign review, broadcast on Sundays on the National Programme and repeated later on the commercial stations. On television, *Gallery* continued and also became a weekly campaign review, while *Compass* also devoted one entire programme, that of 26 November, to the election. Discussing the change, *Gallery* producer Des Monaghan said, 'The public will certainly know its politicians far better than they have in the past'.³⁴ He was correct. There was still some way to go: the corporation, and the politicians, were still not ready for face-to-face political debates on radio or television. And the current affairs programming did not fully escape the confines of the past. Strong questioning of political leaders and other candidates, and relentless investigation of their circumstances and political fortunes, were not introduced until later in the 1970s. But election broadcasting moved out of its infancy at this time. The new networking ability meant the nationwide transmission of election programmes in 1969, though the election night results transmission was assisted by the use of mobile microwave units usually used for outside

broadcasts to maintain the link should any of the permanent stations fail. Ian Johnstone of *Compass* fronted television's 1969 election results with Professor Robert Chapman providing the expert commentary, though this included an enthusiastic and incorrect early calling of a Labour victory. On radio the programme was headed by Paul Cheesewright of *Checkpoint*, with expert commentary from Professor John Roberts.

In the 1972 election the major innovation came as political parties changed their use of the free broadcasting time. Rather than lengthy expositions of policy, there were now short statements marked by emotion and colour. This, the initial application of commercial techniques, came to prominence in 1975.

WAHINE SINKING

In 1968 the corporation's increased competency in news broadcasting faced a major test with the loss of the passenger ship, the *Wahine*, which sank at the entrance to Wellington Harbour on 10 April with the loss of 51 lives. It was a national tragedy and one of the biggest days in broadcasting history.

The *Wahine* was lost during a prodigious storm. In Wellington at 8.30am wind gusts were reported as up to 100 miles an hour, the highest ever recorded. At 12.30pm they were reported as reaching 125 miles an hour. The NZBC had many staff involved; two were unfortunate enough to be aboard the *Wahine*. Dick Wachof of the news staff watched the whole tragedy from the closest vantage point on land, Paddy O'Donnell managed to get a radio car to Worser Bay and George Andrews was aboard the fishing boat *San Antonio II* for the rescue bid.³⁵

Merely being out of doors during the storm was dangerous and obtaining television footage was a major event. Doug Eckhoff, the television editor on duty, reported that his cameramen had shot 3000 feet of film. Much of the film and equipment were water damaged but a total of 800 feet was used in the 10 April news programme. The intensity of the storm and the tragic horror of the sinking and loss of life were presented in the North Island bulletins and six copies of the complete news coverage were sent on the first available flights to Visnews in Sydney and London, CBS in Honolulu and Sydney, ITN in London and ABC in New York. The news was given a wide airing, with the CBS giving the entire film three showings in their bulletins, including the *CBS Evening News*, fronted by legendary anchorman Walter Cronkite. The NZBC made \$1,100 from these sales of the footage, which won the corporation that year's World Newsfilm Award. It was the NZBC's major contribution to that date to international news.³⁶

The achievement indicated that the NZBC journalists finally had a professional ability of international stature, but the inability to show the news

to all New Zealand viewers indicated that much development was still required. What broadcasting there was of the news in the South Island was a major event in its own right. The South Island was isolated for the duration of the storm, with no boats or aircraft operating and no way of getting the day's film south from Wellington. In Dunedin a teleprinter message from the Wellington newsroom, 'You are on your own', was a frank admission of the impossible situation but was pinned in the local newsroom for years as a reminder of 'northern indifference'.³⁷ In Christchurch those stalwarts, the Kennards, came to the rescue. They had a camera capable of telerecording and drove, in the atrocious conditions, north from Christchurch to the Conway store, where the television set, with a long lead to an aerial atop a nearby hill, received WNTV1. The Kennards filmed the news hour, returned to Christchurch and processed their film in time for it to be broadcast from CHTV3 at 11pm. The next night, with the storm still halting inter-island traffic, they did the same again.

BROADCASTING TRAINING CENTRE

The growing competency of the NZBC was both reflected in and partly the result of an increasing emphasis on staff training, which was made more formal during the second half of the 1960s. This was seen as necessary because there were more stations and many more broadcasters. Training for technicians had been centralised in Wellington since 1952 and in 1965 similar training for announcers began, at first under the control of chief announcer Ken Green.³⁸ Soon all the training was co-ordinated by Howard Gough and brought together into one office, in the World Trade Centre at the corner of Vivian and Sturdee Streets. This was the Broadcasting Training Centre, which catered for the whole country, with complete radio and television studios. Technical training and announcer training were the two main activities but various courses, such as documentary and drama production, were also held. There were also courses for journalists, not so much in the craft of journalism — most of the early NZBC journalists came from a newspaper background and were already accepted as journalists — as in radio techniques. Writing for the listening ear rather than the reading eye was a new skill for many, as was reading over air from the printed page in a pleasing and apparently natural manner. Copywriting courses were also introduced.

As with the general integration of radio and television, personnel from both media were catered for at Sturdee Street until the changes of 1975 finally separated the two media. New employees began with a month-long course for inductees, which was followed by up to a year at a station. Then came a further two-week course, after which trainees received a permanent grading. There were regular appraisals and further training throughout each employee's career.

The mythology says that an emphasis on pronunciation turned announcers into BBC clones, but this is an unfair judgement which fails to note both the extent to which the corporation's trainers came to accept the New Zealand accent and the encompassing nature of the pronunciation training. It was not restricted to English: Maori, French and German were also taught and all announcers, whether they worked in commercial or non-commercial stations, were required to attain an acceptable standard. Those who did were graded at one of nine points on a scale and paid according to this grading.

Although pronunciation was seen as important, it was only one aspect of training in a multi-faceted occupation that required skill in a variety of areas. Technical skills were taught in what was known as announce operating, when announcers were on sole duty. Increasingly, they worked alone and so had to learn, and perform, the tasks previously handled by technicians. Interviewing and newsreading were also taught and training was given in ad libbing and eyewitness accounts. The talent varied with the individuals but the seemingly innate ability to ad lib — to describe a scene or event, and to continue talking for as long as required — was usually a hard-won skill learnt after much tuition and practice.

The training continued for more than two decades. There were alterations over the years — tuition in French and German pronunciation stopped during the 1980s — but the major change came at the end of the 1980s when, as part of the general broadcasting restructuring, the training school was closed. But restructuring was not entirely to blame. The growth of networking and developments such as the advent of announcerless stations meant a substantial drop in announcer numbers and a much-reduced need for a continuing flow of trained and competent recruits.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH

A further sign of a growingly mature broadcaster is a willingness to carry out research: to know relatively accurately the size, nature and preferences of the audience. This did start in the late 1960s but slowly and without a full commitment. Audience research was foreign to the NZBS and was only gradually accepted by the NZBC. In 1952 Schroder, then director of broadcasting, had admitted to his minister that the NZBS had 'no way of judging the reactions of listeners other than by correspondence received in the department or through the correspondence columns of the newspapers'. He sought permission to conduct a survey of listener habits but did not receive this until 1957. The then minister, R. M. Algie, described this as a permission 'to develop listener research on a regular and systematic basis', though in reality it was to do no more than employ one researcher.³⁹ In April 1958, with a change of government and minister, Yates, by then director, asked again and received a similar permission from Labour's

Raymond Boord and G. L. Dean, appointed as the NZBS's inaugural research officer, recommended that, as a first task, Auckland and 12 other centres be surveyed to determine the numbers listening to the various stations. He also suggested that the McNair Survey group be contracted to conduct the survey. This Sydney-based research firm was controlled by W. A. McNair who had written to the NZBS regularly during the 1950s seeking work. There are, however, no records of any survey being conducted and the NZBS went out of existence with nothing but anecdotal evidence of the size and nature of its audience.⁴⁰

In June 1962 the NZBC board authorised Stringer 'to proceed as quickly as is reasonably possible with a general survey covering sound radio and television listeners and audiences in the four main centres, priority being given to television audience research'.⁴¹ Again progress was slow. In November 1962, after a further approach from McNair, Stringer told him the corporation would not employ his firm but would do small surveys itself on an ad hoc basis.⁴² Over the next months surveys were conducted into television viewing in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch and into the audience for radio sports broadcasts. The following year there were two more surveys, one into weekday evening and Saturday afternoon viewing in Auckland and Christchurch and another in Wellington and New Plymouth into the housewife audience for women's programmes.⁴³ The surveys gave some information on audience size and preferences. The Saturday afternoon information confirmed for the corporation that live sporting telecasts were what the audience most wanted and information from the housewives' survey was used to help plan the new national women's programme. In 1964–65 McNair was employed to conduct four surveys to determine the changes to radio listening brought about by television and finally, in 1965–66, the corporation itself began doing research on a continuing basis into its audience's composition and preferences.⁴⁴ But these surveys were initially only in Auckland and Christchurch and then only into the television audience. During 1967 Wellington and Dunedin were added to the regular survey list but still for television only.

Stringer was torn with regard to audience research. There was a need to know audience habits, both to plan future broadcasting and to have information on which to base advertising rates, but there were also various reasons for remaining ignorant. Advertisers were as likely to use accurate information on audience size against the corporation as for it. The corporation's non-commercial broadcasters had no desire for material which would indicate just how much larger the commercial radio audience was than that for the National Programme. Further, audience surveys, particularly into radio listening were, under the act, the first step in a process that might lead, eventually, to private radio stations. This reason faded once private stations began, but another appeared: there was no guarantee that survey findings would show the corporation's stations attracted a larger

audience than its private competitors. The NZBC feared such a possibility and was reluctant to determine the matter by conducting surveys, which could easily become public knowledge.

RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING

The broadcasting of religious material, from live broadcasts of church services, to talks and discussions, to entertainment programmes of religious music, was a strong feature of NZBS programming and continued into both the NZBC and television. During the NZBC years such programming changed slowly so that, rather than being seen as principally a task performed for the various denominations, it took its place alongside the rest of corporation programming and was judged on its broadcasting appeal to the wide audience. Such change began when the corporation decided in 1962 to divide its Sunday religious programming so that church services were presented in the morning while the evening was used as a means of trying to reach non-church attenders.⁴⁵ Accordingly the four television stations introduced new religious programming at 6pm and 10.45pm. It was a recognition not only that religious adherence and church attendance were declining and could no longer be regarded as a majority activity, but also that the broadcasting appeal of religious programming needed to be enhanced if it were to remain as part of the offerings of a mass medium.

June 1963 saw the first live telecast of a church service, from Wellington's Cathedral Church of St Paul,⁴⁶ the closest church to Broadcasting House. Although successful, it was very much a tentative use of the outside broadcast (OB) equipment. It showed that live religious telecasting was possible but it was some years before the practice became normal procedure.

When the National Programme was introduced on radio, local religious programming was replaced by two programmes, one for each of the North and South Islands. As with the rest of the National Programme, there was an increasing emphasis on raising presentation standards: clergy were given radio training and accepted the need for rehearsals. This was soon extended to television with further specialised training. The next logical step was taken in 1972 when the corporation decided to set up a Religious Broadcasts Unit. Although a close liaison with the churches continued through consultative committees, this move made it clear that religious broadcasting was principally a broadcasting rather than a religious service. The final responsibility lay with broadcasters rather than with the clergy.

EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTING

The NZBC inherited the NZBS system of educational radio broadcasts: the broadcasts from the Correspondence School, which were mainly for isolated

rural children unable to attend a school, and the Broadcasts to Schools programme, designed to be listened to in the classroom. Both were continued and developed considerably during the 13 years of the corporation.

The Broadcasts to Schools programme did include material for the secondary schools, such as a series of lessons in French broadcast in 1963, but was aimed mainly at primary school pupils. Originally focused on rural schools and designed to assist rural teachers who were not always competent in such teaching specialities as music and foreign languages, during the 1960s the broadcasts were directed more to all primary schools, urban and rural. In the mid-1960s the most popular broadcasts, *The World We Live In*, which elaborated on people and stories featuring in recent news, were heard by three-quarters of the country's primary schools. As with all non-commercial broadcasting, the schools' programme changed greatly from September 1964 with the introduction of the networked National Programme. From this time the Broadcasts to Schools were produced centrally in Wellington and, as with the rest of the National Programme, the change was the impetus for a concentration on excellence. A major part of the success of the Broadcasts to Schools programme was its linkage with booklets, prepared within the NZBC and printed and distributed by the Department of Education. Excellent productions in their own right, the booklets tied in well with the broadcasts and increased their influence on teachers and pupils. In 1963 274,000 copies were distributed; 10 years later the number was 665,000.

The corporation's success in educational radio broadcasting was not matched in television. The NZBS noted in its final report that, along with the Department of Education, it was studying the introduction of telecasts to schools,⁴⁷ but little progress was made during the NZBC years. In spite of there being only a single channel, the difficulty was not a lack of willingness on the corporation's part. In December 1967 the minister of broadcasting announced to a meeting of educational representatives that the NZBC was prepared to broadcast a half-hour programme on two afternoons a week. This prompted the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) to investigate and prepare its own 1968 report, *Education and Television*. The NZEI considered the NZBC offer encouraging but argued that two half-hour programmes a week were completely inadequate and would fail to satisfy the demands of the curriculum. Instead it called for four hours a day, Monday to Friday, to be set aside for telecasts to schools. It also damned the existing children's programmes and suggested that the NZBC re-evaluate its policy and take steps to achieve high-quality productions. It noted the success of *Country Calendar* and suggested an analogous programme on the education sector. It also noted with interest the medical training films telecast after normal hours and felt the teaching profession could well have the strongest claim for a similar concession to telecast in-service education programmes.

Although the corporation's and the educators' views were obviously far apart, at the time neither the NZBC offer of afternoon broadcasts to schools nor the more grand NZEI suggestion were possible. As the NZEI pointed out, officially there were no television receivers in schools and no action had been taken to prepare teachers for the use of the medium. The NZEI called for the establishment of a national planning authority to begin some systematic development. The NZBC offer came to nothing, foundering on the educational authorities' unreadiness to commit the necessary funds to allow television receivers to become a normal part of classroom equipment.

MAORI BROADCASTING

Maori broadcasting was a topic of historical neglect in New Zealand. While Maori items, particularly songs, were heard regularly, broadcasting oriented to Maori was scant. A Maori news programme had been on air since 1942 when the minister of broadcasting accepted a suggestion that there be a weekly bulletin of war news in Maori. The bulletins, read by Wiremu Parker, continued after the war as general news bulletins. Varying in length and placement, they were prepared within the Information Section of the Department of Tourism and Publicity. In 1954 a weekly talk in Maori was introduced. It was presented at different times from those radio stations in predominantly Maori areas.⁴⁸ This was added to in 1957 when Ken Collins, station manager at Napier, invited local school teacher Ted Nepia to give a regular programme in Maori for listeners in the region.⁴⁹ But Maori programming was so limited that, when, in 1963, Radio New Zealand, the international shortwave service, asked for two 15-minute Maori programmes weekly, these could not be supplied. Radio New Zealand was forced to start a system of programming in which it broadcast one new 15-minute Maori programme weekly and also re-broadcast another 15-minute programme first heard six months before.⁵⁰

From 1 December 1963 the corporation's Maori news and talks programmes were amalgamated into the one weekly half-hour programme, *Te Reo o Te Maori*, which was broadcast from 5.30 to 6pm on Sundays from eight North Island stations in Maori population areas. The stations were linked for the broadcasts. Twenty minutes was devoted to a general programme and 10 minutes was for news. At this time the NZBC news section took over responsibility for the news content. It was the start of a recognition that Maori broadcasting was a proper and necessary activity for the NZBC, but it was grudging. The total time given to Maori broadcasting was slightly less than before amalgamation and was handicapped by being aired at a low listening time. Initially the corporation was unwilling to extend the programme beyond the eight stations. In particular attempts to add a Christchurch station to the link, Christchurch being a city with a

growing Maori population, were unsuccessful. But when the National Programme began in September 1964 *Te Reo o Te Maori* was put on the programme at the same Sunday time and was heard in all centres.

The programmes' general content was at first compiled and presented by Ted Nepia. The NZBC required that the programmes be presented entirely in Maori and have no regional or tribal basis. Nepia received 12-week appointments that were renewed but not made permanent. When *Te Reo o Te Maori* was broadcast nationally, the corporation accepted that permanent arrangements were needed and Leo Fowler, the 2XG Gisborne station manager, was appointed the inaugural Maori programme organiser and moved to the Wellington Head Office. Nepia, by now teaching in Wellington, remained highly involved in the preparation of the Maori broadcasts. In 1964 *The Maori Session* was added and in 1965 Wiremu Kerekere joined Fowler as a Maori programme officer and, after his retirement in 1966, succeeded him as head of Maori programmes.⁵¹

In 1966 Maori language religious broadcasts were presented from Rotorua's 1YZ; this was the first use of the Maori language beyond specifically Maori programming. Over the next year services in Maori were recorded in many parts of the country, all for broadcast from 1YZ. These transmissions were extended in 1968 and also broadcast from Whangarei, Napier and Gisborne.

Although there was a growth and development in Maori programming, the corporation's actions at times cast doubt on its commitment to matters Maori. This was most noticeable in 1967 when it altered its policy on Maori pronunciation and began using the anglicised (mis)pronunciation of Maori place names. This caused some mirth, with correspondents indicating the changed meanings of some anglicised pronunciations, but generally there was considerable disappointment in the Maori community and the Maori Council asked for a change of policy and a return to correct pronunciation.⁵² The NZBC did finally revert to the earlier policy but this episode, and the general reluctance to extend Maori language use beyond the major North Island areas of Maori population, indicated that the corporation had little inclination to act as a champion for the language.

REGIONAL CONTROL OF BROADCASTING

After the arrival of Radio Hauraki as a pirate broadcaster, the government's 1966 re-election and the formation of the Broadcasting Authority, the corporation realised that legal private radio and perhaps even private television would be allowed. It decided to reorganise the administration of the NZBC to meet the competition and so began a system of enhanced regional control of broadcasting. The change began in 1968 when the board engaged a firm of management consultants, P-E Consulting, 'to study objectively the structure of the NZBC'.⁵³ The choice of consultants

and, indeed, the notion of having consultants, originated with Price, the deputy chairman, who, as managing director of Shell, was used to the practice and considered that the consultants would not only reach the same conclusions as the board but give them added authority. This was endorsed by the board; McFarlane subsequently regarded the consultants as 'just as anxious to get our approval of what they were doing as we were to get the result we wanted'. They were 'an administrative tool' whose 'recommendation was what we wanted'.⁵⁴

A key part of the board's strategy was to exclude Stringer who, they assumed, would be unsupportive of any proposals for reorganisation. Because Stringer was soon to retire, the board deliberately left him out of all discussions with the consultants, instead involving Lionel Sceats, the heir apparent as director-general. The other main figure was Keith Hay, then at the Christchurch office. A man with wide broadcasting administrative experience, he was seconded to Wellington to work with P-E Consulting.

The consultants reported in December and a substantial reorganisation of the administrative structure began. The essence of the consultants' recommendations was that, by decentralising, the NZBC would be in a better position to meet regional competition from private radio stations. The corporation's response, however, went beyond this. It removed its senior positions of directors of television, sound broadcasting and engineering and replaced them with northern, central and southern directorships. The board, and particularly McFarlane, were impressed with broadcasting's station employees whom they regarded as considerably more competent than those in head office. McFarlane believed most station managers were imbued with a sense of service and were backed up in their various regions by a vitality and a rich reservoir of ability. McFarlane, whose stated administrative philosophy was to put operational opportunity and decisions as far down the line as possible, moved to a decentralised system that gave much more authority to district directors; they were closer to the station managers, who would therefore have more influence.

It was a curiously extensive response to the first scent of competition and, though greeted positively within the commercial radio stations, ran against the networking achievements of the 1960s within non-commercial radio, the imminent networking within television, and indeed the whole history of a national broadcasting orientation. J. W. Proudfoot, the Auckland district manager, became northern region director and J. N. Norman and N. R. Palmer took the central and southern jobs respectively. The greatest support for the changes came from Auckland: Proudfoot was a keen advocate of the reorganisation from its first suggestion. The Auckland district, with easily the country's greatest population share, had long wished to operate independently. Many senior administrators saw this as a problem but McFarlane accepted and capitalised on this attitude.

Norman and Palmer, however, directors of engineering and television respectively, were aghast and wrote strongly to Stringer, sending copies also to McFarlane. For Palmer it was the 'first time in 35 years in broadcasting I have been confronted with an appointment in which I do not genuinely believe'. The board had adopted the measures, which were a sudden U-turn in long-standing policy, without giving either Norman or Palmer a promised opportunity to comment. McFarlane believed the men were upset because they did not wish to leave Wellington but this was an unfair response to their complaints, which were informed by years of knowledgeable service with the NZBS and NZBC. Palmer regarded the proposed changes as against the whole trend in television — development from a strong central organisation. He saw their relevance for competition-facing radio stations but argued it was 'entirely possible and practicable to extend the authority of the district managers to deal with this'. Palmer considered the changes particularly counterproductive for television. The sale of advertising was almost entirely national in character and the establishment of networking, the development of Avalon, the purchase of overseas programmes, programme assessment and censorship were all based on a centrally co-ordinated, national orientation.

Both Norman and Palmer drew attention to the engineering implications. The 'extraordinary decision' was an 'effective downgrading of the engineering division'. The engineers had been of paramount importance during the years in which coverage was the main aim of the corporation and it was inevitable their status would decline as that goal was achieved, but Norman and Palmer argued that the change went too far and would 'completely destroy' the effective use of the engineering resources which demanded direction from and accountability to the highest level of the corporation.⁵⁵ Their apprehension was shared by the corporation's engineers who, apart from fearing any loss of engineering effectiveness, also saw the restructuring as lowering their chances for further promotion. With the top position effectively removed, the well-qualified and competent engineers in the middle ranks found themselves without prospects of further advancement.⁵⁶

Whatever the merits and demerits of the restructuring, the administrative reorganisation of broadcasting did not last. Contrary to expectations, its introduction was followed immediately by the retirement of McFarlane and the reappointment of Stringer. McFarlane was offered and accepted the position of director of the New Zealand Administrative Staff College and so retired early from the NZBC board to continue his extensive public service career elsewhere. Stringer, who turned 58 in 1968, could not be compulsorily retired until he turned 60, but that marked the end of four decades in the public service and the board had assumed that he would take the usual course and retire on a full pension. He declined, however, to take early retirement. Although the board no longer wanted him as direc-

tor-general, he could not be placed at a comparable level anywhere else in the public service so he was reappointed until he reached the retirement age of 60 in 1970.⁵⁷

With McFarlane, the reorganisation's champion, gone and with Stringer, deliberately kept out of all the restructuring discussions, still in charge, there was little impetus to continue the new arrangements. A disappointed McFarlane was correct in his assessment that decentralisation was never given a proper trial. The main effect of the reorganisation was not the experience gained from the brief experiment with regional control but that it concentrated board and executive attention on an administrative dead end, during a period in which both the growth of private radio and the government's plans for broadcasting required the NZBC's focus to be elsewhere.

WALTER MCKINNON

McFarlane's successor as chairman was Walter McKinnon who took up the position from 1 February 1969. McKinnon had just retired from the army with the rank of major-general and the position of chief of the general staff. Aged 58, he had sought further employment and lobbied for the broadcasting chairman job.⁵⁸ He continued the practice begun by McFarlane in which the board generally and the chairman particularly had considerable day-to-day involvement with the work of the corporation. Like his predecessor, he was explicitly guided by Normanbrook's BBC practice and sent copies of Normanbrook's address to all members of the board. In 1972 McKinnon decried his system of board operation. 'Board members are encouraged to take an interest in all programmes, entertainment, current affairs, news etc. These matters are treated very thoroughly in the Director General's monthly reports which the Board considers in detail. Directors and Editors of News and Current Affairs are on hand and there is, to use the Normanbrook term, "a constant flow of criticism, praise and blame".'⁵⁹ McKinnon and his board, like their predecessors, did not make programming decisions, accepting this was a matter to be determined by the broadcasters, but their influence was felt after transmission and followed the Normanbrook pattern of 'editorial control by retrospective review'.⁶⁰

BROADCASTING AUTHORITY ACT 1968

But McKinnon's board was no longer the sole official broadcasting agency. The government's 1966 election manifesto, in the wake of the Radio Hauraki saga, included the promise, as the minister phrased it, 'to relieve the corporation of the responsibility of acting as both judge and jury' in the allocation of private broadcasting warrants.⁶¹ This became fact in the

1968 Broadcasting Authority Act. After the 1966 election National was far more accepting of private broadcasting than it had been in 1962. Holyoake's campaign speech in support of Radio Hauraki led the way, even though some National caucus opposition still remained, notably from the Speaker, Roy Jack. An ardent supporter of the NZSO, Jack was opposed to allowing competition for fear that the NZBC's income would fall and imperil the continuing support of the orchestra. But the majority were for the entry of private stations and waverers were convinced by Scott's recounting of his discussions with Llewellyn and Stringer during his refusal of the corporation's proposals to begin the second channel. According to Scott, these grew heated enough to arouse a fear of a broadcasting monopoly under a control antagonistic to his party.⁶² The voice of the NZBC could no longer be presumed to be friendly and supportive; an alternative was needed.

Immediately after the 1966 election Scott asked the corporation for draft proposals to establish the New Zealand Broadcasting Authority (NZBA). After his appointment as Scott's replacement, Lance Adams-Schneider acknowledged the NZBC's strong feelings against private broadcasting but made it clear that this held little sway. He saw no reason why the corporation should not admit publicly that, in view of the government's announced policy, it must prepare to face competition and make it clear that it was ready to do so.⁶³ This was accepted. The NZBC was not happy about much of the eventual legislation but it did acknowledge that there was to be change. McFarlane argued that there was no need for further legislation to start private broadcasting. He felt, as NZBC chairman, that he had to tread the narrow line between being independent of government direction and yet complying with government policy. Although he considered Holyoake's 'I like pirates' statement to be an embarrassment to the minister and an abrupt reversal of the government's policy, McFarlane accepted the new approach and required the NZBC to take a much more generous attitude to applications for private licences. But because the election and the government's announcement of new legislation followed so quickly, the NZBC had no opportunity to follow through with a new generosity.⁶⁴

The NZBC continued to resist the government's further proposal that the authority be given power to supervise all broadcasts. Stringer pointed out that, in Britain, the public corporations, the BBC and ITA, were both wholly responsible for the content of their programmes and for the day-to-day conduct of their affairs. Similarly, in Australia the Broadcasting Control Board and in Canada the Board of Broadcasting Governors had no control over the programmes of their respective country's public broadcasters. Stringer could 'find no precedent where programmes prepared by a public service broadcasting authority (which has been established by government) are supervised and controlled by another similarly appointed

body'. He felt that the proposal 'would leave members of the corporation with very limited responsibilities'.⁶⁵ This argument had little influence on the government.

In the final act the authority's functions fell principally into two groups: first, to adjudicate on applications to establish broadcasting stations and, second, to ensure that broadcasters complied with various broadcasting standards. The word 'authority' in the new body's title was a compromise between these two functions: neither 'licensing' nor 'control' was deemed acceptable. The word 'licensing' could not be used because technically the Post Office was the licensing authority, and 'control' was considered inappropriate for an organisation whose main function was to increase warrants.

All of Part III of the 1961 act, which dealt with private broadcasting stations, was repealed and the power to allow such stations was handed to the new authority; the NZBC could no longer permit or deny private broadcasting. Although this was the main change, the 1968 act went further. The authority had no jurisdiction over shortwave transmissions and the NZBC-operated shortwave station remained under a close ministerial supervision, but otherwise the authority was given power to supervise all broadcasting, to make rules regarding the character of advertising and programming in general and to encourage as much New Zealand-produced material as reasonably possible. To enforce its rulings, the authority had the right to suspend or revoke a warrant though, in the case of NZBC stations, any such action required ministerial approval.

Although the authority's power to set broadcasting standards applied to NZBC and private stations, there was considerable subsequent confusion about the overlapping powers of the corporation and the authority. The first part of section 10 of the 1968 act, which dealt with broadcasting standards, repeated the wording of the 1961 legislation. So though there was little doubt as to what was required, there was much debate over which organisation should exert control. The powers of the authority went further than those of the NZBC in that, though both were to prescribe programme standards, the authority could also set standards for advertising and provide that broadcasts contained a prescribed proportion of New Zealand material.

The broadcasting legislation was the most intensely debated of that parliamentary session and the authority's duties received most attention. The Labour Opposition made it clear that the matter was politically contentious. It regarded the act as 'a brazen attempt to corner a sizeable section of a profitable public undertaking'⁶⁶ and was particularly concerned that newspaper interests were preparing to move into broadcasting. Wilson & Horton, proprietors of the *New Zealand Herald*, and New Zealand Newspapers, proprietors of the *Auckland Star* and *Christchurch Star*, had indicated to the Statutes Revisions Committee considering the bill that

they intended to join forces to seek a broadcasting warrant. Government members did not deny this possibility. D. J. Riddiford, himself a newspaper director, argued 'that the organisations best qualified to manage a station existing to a large extent for the dissemination of news are newspapers'.⁶⁷ Labour's reply came from deputy leader Hugh Watt, who warned all likely applicants that 'under a Labour Government their warrant will be withdrawn. There will be no question of any payment for goodwill'.⁶⁸ But this warning, which was echoed by various of his colleagues, was not long-lasting. Labour's policy was for the NZBC to control all broadcasting but, once the wide public support for Radio Hauraki had been demonstrated, many Labour members, particularly those from Auckland, realised they would be unable to continue to support a policy ban on private radio. The first public indication of a change in attitude from Labour came early in 1969 when Norman Kirk stated that a Labour government would not necessarily revoke all private broadcasting warrants.⁶⁹

The awarding of warrants for television stations received special attention in the debate: 'We are not yet ready for a second channel,' said the minister. '... Our present overseas funds are needed for other purposes.'⁷⁰ He also indicated that countrywide coverage for the first channel would need to be completed before a second channel could be considered. Labour member Dr A. M. (Martyn) Finlay regarded this as directing the authority even before it had begun. 'A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse and a very definite nod has been given.'⁷¹ The NZBC was and might remain the country's principal broadcaster, but it would no longer have a monopoly or be able to make unilateral decisions about New Zealand's broadcasting requirements.

THE BROADCASTING AUTHORITY

The act required the appointment of a three-member authority including a chairman who had to be a barrister or solicitor. Appointments were for three years, though, to ensure continuity of members, two of the initial appointments were for shorter periods. The inaugural chairman was R. T. Garlick of Auckland and the two other appointees were H. E. Duff Daysh and R. B. Miller, both from Wellington. Garlick resigned in the first year because of ill health and was replaced by R. T. Peacock of Wellington. Offices were set up early in 1969 on Lambton Quay in the capital and a secretary, J. F. D'Ath, and engineer, R. Cassey, were seconded from the State Services Commission and Post Office respectively. By the end of March, 60 applicants for radio station licences had lodged letters of intent. Seventeen came from Auckland and the next highest grouping, of nine, were from Wellington.

The minister told the authority that 'the protection of existing facilities is an essential element of Government policy' and this was reinforced in

the legislation where all existing stations, the NZBC's plus 4XD, were deemed to hold warrants. An early task was to determine how many more frequencies were available and therefore how many additional stations could be licensed. This required liaison with Australian authorities for, in 1950, a trans-Tasman agreement had been made on the use of the medium frequency broadcasting band. The accord reached represented 'a final sharing of all available frequencies in this band' and would 'enable the development of medium frequency broadcasting in New Zealand for a number of years'.⁷² This contact with the Australian Broadcasting Control Board meant the authority was also informed of and influenced by Australian procedures and technical and programme standards. Early on the authority devised a series of rules. By the time applications for additional radio station warrants were called for, the authority had programme rules, technical rules, advertising rules and administrative rules, all of which had to be observed by all warrant holders.

The authority demonstrated its distinction from the NZBC by issuing its first warrant to 4XD, 'in recognition of its historical pre-eminence', and only then to the four YA stations of the corporation.⁷³ Like the NZBC under the 1961 act, the authority was allowed to conduct surveys to determine the need for additional stations. It failed to do so but, unlike the NZBC, it did not use this as a tactic not to call for applications. Instead it ruled that this was a permissive rather than mandatory requirement and ignored the matter. Formal applications for new station licences were called for in June 1969. At this stage the NZBC issued a writ of prohibition against the authority. Although this was settled out of court, it was the first indication that the authority's work would be subject to the maximum legal procrastination.

PRIVATE RADIO

The authority's first application for a licence for a private, commercial radio station, lodged on 4 November 1969, came from Radio Hauraki. The pirate station was reorganised in preparation for coming ashore and floated as a public company. In spite of some unusual provisions in which founders' shares were created so that the existing directors retained effective control of the company regardless of their paid shareholding, Radio Hauraki (NZ) Ltd was regarded as a good investment and was heavily oversubscribed, opening and closing on 25 June 1969, the day of issue.

Formal applications did not approach the number who had sent letters of intent, but still the authority's first hearing, held in Auckland, dealt with five applications. It was clear there would be considerable competition for warrants. Hauraki's application was joined by one from International Advertisers, the owners of Radio i, broadcasting under contract from IZM, the retitled IYD. There were three other applicants. First there was



The development of truly portable radios helped expand the radio audience and increase its youth focus. *EVENING POST*

Radio Haeremai, for which the shares were held by five members of the Mormon church, for an eventual church trust board. The second was the Auckland Broadcasting Company, the major shareholders of which were New Zealand Forest Products and Butland Industries. The proposed chairman was Duncan Cox, brother of Sir Geoffrey Cox, who for 12 years had been chairman of Britain's Independent Television News and was then deputy chairman of Yorkshire Television. The assumption was that, if the application succeeded, it would be the start of an intended private radio and television network in which Sir Geoffrey would become involved. The final applicant was Radio Auckland in which Wilson & Horton, publishers of the *New Zealand Herald*, and New Zealand Newspapers, publishers of the *Auckland Star* and *Christchurch Star*, each held 25 per cent of the shares. Radio Auckland would thus have access to the news sources of the NZPA.⁷⁴

The hearing opened on 16 December 1969, with the substantial evidence heard in late January and early February 1970. The authority granted warrants to Radio Hauraki, though first requiring it to change to a more conventional system of shareholders' control, and to Radio i. After appeals against the decision were denied in the Supreme Court, Radio Hauraki opened a legal land-based station on 26 September 1970; Radio i

followed on 31 October 1970. Before it was abolished in December 1973, the authority allowed seven private commercial stations. Along with Radio Hauraki and Radio i, these were to Radio Waikato in Hamilton which began transmissions on 2 November 1970, to Radio Whakatane, which began transmissions on 30 June 1971, to Radio Otago, which began transmissions from Dunedin on 20 November 1971, to Christchurch's Radio Avon, which began transmissions on 4 August 1973, and to Radio Windy in the capital, which began transmissions on 16 November 1973. By late 1973 the seven private commercial stations had a combined 24 per cent of the total audience aged 10 and over, as opposed to the 22 NZBC commercial stations' 54 per cent.⁷⁵ This was an impressive statistic against the more numerous, more geographically spread and higher-powered NZBC stations and indicated the correctness of David Gapes's view, when he first advocated Radio Hauraki, that the New Zealand audience craved an alternative to the corporation fare.

One of the matters the authority had to consider when judging warrant applications was 'the desirability of avoiding monopolies in the ownership or control of news media'.⁷⁶ Although this clause appeared to count against existing media organisations including newspapers and the NZBC itself, it did not rule them out of court. One of the authority's first moves was to decide on the nature of radio station ownership by newspaper interests. The authority said that, to prevent monopolies, their shareholding should not exceed 30 per cent. This decision led the companies to withdraw their applications as they did not wish to be limited in this way.⁷⁷ Thirty per cent became the accepted mark. When the Radio Waikato warrant was granted, an appeal saw the Supreme Court uphold that percentage and require an Independent Newspapers Ltd subsidiary to reduce its holding of the share capital from 35 to 30 per cent.⁷⁸

COLOUR TELEVISION AND A SECOND CHANNEL

Early on the authority received an approach for both radio and television warrants. It came from the Associated Network Ltd, a consortium of four of the country's major companies (UEB Industries, Kerridge Odeon Corporation, Wright Stephenson & Company Ltd and J. Wattie Canneries). They intended to provide a national commercial radio service and the first of four regional television channels within a year, with the others to follow within 'a reasonably short period'. As the *Dominion* noted, it was the first such package deal offered to the authority.⁷⁹ In a pre-emptive statement, however, Adams-Schneider made it clear that such an application was unwelcome. The authority had to take heed of government policy, which remained one of completing first channel coverage before starting a second. The minister's view was that 'we should move gradually into radio which is the lesser earner of commercial revenue and



I. L. McKay, counsel for the Associated Network Ltd, addressing the three-member Broadcasting Authority at the Wellington hearing. From left, H. E. Duff Daysh, R. T. Peacock, R. B. Miller. *EVENING POST*

licence fees for the NZBC and see how the corporation fares before we move into television. I welcome the advent of competition but at the same time we have to preserve what we have.⁷⁸⁰

This ministerial attitude was shortlived and on 23 October 1969 Adams-Schneider instructed the NZBA to begin an inquiry into television services. The terms of reference were broad. There were 11 of them, some with sub-headings, including '(k) any other relevant matters', that required investigation of the need for a second channel, whether it should be in black and white or colour, the standards for both systems, whether the NZBC, private enterprise or some other body should control a further channel, the various effects of both a second channel and private enterprise on the corporation, the desirability of establishing a New Zealand Transmission Authority to control overall use of facilities, whether such an authority should be the NZBC, the Post Office or some other body, the use of VHF and UHF frequency bands, the need for change in television coverage, programme hours and content and, finally, policy towards television translator societies and television diffusion services, especially those using radio frequency transmissions.

The minister's call for the inquiry, in effect an acceptance that there would be a second channel, recognised that there was substantial public support for an extension of television. A 1969 poll found that at least three-

quarters of New Zealand voters thought there should be a second channel and at least two-thirds thought it should not be controlled by the NZBC; a small majority thought the control should be through a public company.⁸¹

Of the terms of reference, that for the type of colour system was seen as urgent. The NZBC had already decided on the German PAL (phase alternative line) system, used in all Western European countries except France, and it asked the authority to make this aspect of the inquiry a priority.

All colour broadcasting follows the three components principle first expounded by the Frenchman, Georges Valensi, in 1938. For colour television a third signal, chrominance, is added to sound and luminance, the two that make up black and white transmission. For New Zealand there were three possibilities. The first was the NTSC system, used for 15 years in North America and also in Japan. It is named after the National Television Systems Committee which standardised the RCA dot-sequential technique of colour broadcasting. This American system, which uses 525 lines per picture, is prone to error in the colour reproduction of the signal and colour adjustments have to be made at each individual receiver. The other two possibilities, PAL on 625 lines, and the French system SECAM on 819 lines, both ensure that correct colours are presented at the receiver. The PAL system in particular is a development from NTSC. Although SECAM is felt to be as good as and in some cases superior to PAL, at the New Zealand inquiry all opinion favoured the adoption of PAL. Its use in Western Europe, its compatibility with the North American NTSC and its planned introduction to Australia, countries from which New Zealand bought most of its imported programmes, was a major consideration. Also, it was used in Sweden and Switzerland which had similar terrain difficulties to New Zealand. And only Australia and New Zealand proposed using the VHF band for colour television; other countries use the UHF band. By following Australia in adopting PAL, New Zealand would benefit from Australian technology and experience in overcoming any problems of transmitting PAL by VHF.⁸² Using VHF for colour television was a luxury available to New Zealand and Australia. Alphonse Ouimet, former president of the CBC, argued to the inquiry, 'UHF is to be considered only when there are not enough VHF channels. It offers no advantage over VHF to compensate for its much higher cost, its more restricted range and more critical transmission . . . the geographical isolation that New Zealand enjoys coupled with its small population should make it one of the last countries in the world to have to resort to UHF for television broadcasting.'⁸³

The authority rapidly accepted the unanimous view in the submissions and on 23 March 1970 it recommended the PAL system as technically pre-eminent and particularly suitable for New Zealand conditions. The fact that such an important decision had been made just five months after the original ministerial request for the inquiry seemed to augur well for the

rest of the deliberations. But this was the end of a speedy progress towards a second television channel.

The authority realised that colour was inescapable and knew that the time had arrived. Monochrome broadcasting equipment was rapidly becoming obsolete and less readily available. Programmes imported to New Zealand were increasingly made in colour and the international market for monochrome was dying, meaning New Zealand would be unable to sell its own programmes unless it converted. A second channel and the introduction of colour needed to be considered together as a single question.

The authority received various submissions regarding a second channel. Radio Hauraki, for instance, appeared as a potential shareholder in a company to apply for a commercial television warrant in the Auckland area alone. But the two main submissions came from applicants seeking full national television coverage: the NZBC itself and Associated Network Ltd. The latter was remarkably detailed, with 188 pages of evidence from the group's principal witness, Gordon Dryden, alone.⁸⁴ Dryden had worked full time on the project for many months but his interest dated from well before his original 1963 television licence application to the NZBC. Dryden's evidence and his counsel's cross-examination of others were highly persuasive. The cross-examination, in particular, punctured the submissions from the Treasury and the Department of Industries and Commerce, both of which were shown to have greatly inflated the costs of a second channel. Both Dryden and the Post Office contradicted much of the data from these government departments, which had been taken from the NZBC. Their lower figures were eventually accepted as the more correct.⁸⁵

The corporation was suspicious of the terms of reference for the inquiry, particularly the one that said the authority must have regard to 'the best way of introducing private enterprise competition'. Robin Cooke QC, the NZBC counsel, considered the authority did not answer clearly whether the basic question of corporation control or competitive control remained open or was predetermined against the NZBC. But the corporation had little choice other than to make its submission and did so on the assumption that it would be treated equally.

When it made its submission, in August 1970, the coverage for the first channel was still incomplete. Sceats stated that 90 per cent of the population were receiving single channel coverage of acceptable technical standard. The three major remaining areas were the central region of the North Island and, in the South Island, the West Coast and Central Otago. These were to be covered by 1972. So the NZBC argued that, in 10 years, it had established an almost complete nationwide coverage, without borrowing and at no cost to the taxpayer. Debt-free assets valued at around \$20 million had been built up from licence fees and advertising revenue and reserves of \$7 million were set aside for improvements and expansion. The corporation was ready and eager for a second channel and its submis-

sion was similar to the one it had made to Scott six years before. It proceeded on the assumption that a second channel was needed to provide excellence and choice. As one of its witnesses, Huw Weldon, managing director of BBC television, stated, 'You cannot do a full broadcasting job which can provide pleasure and insight and delight on one channel. You need two.' The NZBC proposed that it control the second channel which should be nationwide and non-commercial and thus provide an alternative and contrasting programme. It also wanted the channel to be established with colour-compatible equipment and a firm date fixed for the introduction of colour.⁸⁶

The authority's hearing was a continuing presence for the NZBC and other would-be television broadcasters. Within the corporation much of the effort of McKinnon's board was focused on the hearings and on the attempts to gain the second channel. For everyone involved, however, it was an ultimately fruitless exercise eventually overtaken by political changes that rendered the deliberations irrelevant.

RETIREMENT OF STRINGER

Stringer's retirement on 31 July 1970 — he was to have left in March but stayed on while his successor's appointment was considered — meant the removal of the NZBC's dominating personality. His achievements included the initial granting of television broadcasting to the NZBC, the establishment of journalism within the corporation, the spread of single channel coverage and the considerable growth of the NZBC during the 1960s. On the other hand, his regard for the NZBC as opposed to broadcasting itself led him to resist many advances for fear of antagonising the powerful and arousing a consequent attack on the corporation. As McFarlane said of Stringer, 'To avoid disruption it is better not to let any sparks fly.'⁸⁷ Stringer urged and regularly required his producers to err on the side of caution and this slowed the corporation's growth towards maturity. Along with his executives, he failed to accept the changes that were taking place in radio and opened the opportunity for private radio that was exploited by Radio Hauraki. Although he dominated Llewellyn's board, his continuing battles with MacFarlane's and McKinnon's directors meant that, during the second half of his term, the NZBC board and executive were only occasionally working together for the good of the corporation.

Even if he had wished to do so, it is doubtful if Stringer would have been able to take the NZBC to assertive independence more rapidly. He had spent most of his working life inside a broadcasting government department where the ethos was support for the administration of the day rather than public service per se. He continued in an NZBC very dependent on ministerial approval and in a country unaccustomed to broadcasting that was not an arm of government. Experience, circumstances and

personal inclination led him to allow only gradual change. Holcroft deemed it 'just possible that a strong man could take control and win a true independence, but he would have to be the sort of man I have not seen among us in my generation'.⁸⁸ It is pointless to criticise Stringer for being a man of his times and generation. The irony of Gilbert Stringer's career as director-general is that he, more than anyone, understood the nature of the forces that ranged against the development of an independent NZBC: political refusal to accept a strong broadcasting journalism, financial controls hindering the development of a national broadcaster, cultural conservatism countering the development of new programming. Stringer understood these problems so well that he accepted a stunting of the NZBC in order to accommodate the objections of those who wished for a continuation of the past.

LIONEL SCEATS

There was considerable interest in the position of director-general. McKinnon said there were a total of 50 applicants, most from Commonwealth countries. Among those considered to be applicants was Sir Geoffrey Cox, the New Zealand-born head of Britain's ITN. The usually well-informed *New Zealand Herald* contended his wish for the position was thwarted by the Cabinet Committee on the State Services which would not allow a salary higher than the then \$11,200.⁸⁹

Whatever the process of choice, the position eventually went to the NZBC man, Lionel Sceats, who had been in broadcasting since 1934 and had risen through the ranks. When the ZB stations began in 1937 Sceats, then an announcer at 4YA, chose to move to the new commercial stations. This highly unusual move led to his being regarded as a traitor by Shelley, who told him he would never be able to return to the national stations.⁹⁰ Sceats's choice meant that, by the time he was a senior broadcaster, he had, unlike most of his peers, experience in both sides of broadcasting. He was the first head of either the NZBC or the NZBS who had actually been a broadcaster. The appointment triggered Ian Mackay, the doyen of New Zealand commercial broadcasting, to express his delight to the minister.⁹¹ This was no small matter. For Mackay, Sceats was the first admirable head of New Zealand broadcasting since Colin Scrimgeour was fired in 1941. 'Broadcasting has not been very fortunate in its Directors. Shelley came in too late, Yates was an accountant, never served on a station or in any other capacity, Schroder was a simon pure amateur and Holcroft's reference to his "schoolmaster" approach is valid. Stringer was another accountant with no experience in any other broadcasting field and it was not until Sceats won through that New Zealand had its first "professional" Director General.'⁹² The appointment received general praise. Even the *New Zealand Herald*, always regarded by the NZBC as having a chip on its shoulder about broad-



Lionel Sceats.

casting, warmly welcomed Sceats as 'in every sense a professional who has learned the requirements of his job from the ground up'.⁹³

In spite of the different natures of Stringer and Sceats, there was considerable continuity in corporation policy. In particular Sceats soon showed that his appointment brought little change in the NZBC attitude to private broadcasting. This became obvious when Radio Hauraki sought an advertising campaign on Northern Television. Sceats refused the proposed \$30,000 expenditure on the dubious grounds of ensuring equal treatment: the NZBC commercial stations did not advertise on television.⁹⁴ Like Stringer, Sceats was prepared to stand against the board when he considered it necessary. He once went to the brink of resignation when convincing the board to reverse its wish to, as he saw it, censor the corporation's news from South Africa. But there were also big differences between the two directors-general. Unlike Stringer, Sceats accepted the board as supreme, regarding its members as 'there to ensure the chief executive did not get out of hand. . . . They had no executive functions but could direct the chief executive.'⁹⁵ The relationship between board and its chief executive was considerably more amicable and mutually supportive during Sceats's time.

LOCAL CONTENT

Sceats was director-general for almost five years and a noticeable outcome of his term was an increasing emphasis on the importance of New Zealand content, particularly in drama. This was not entirely due to Sceats personally even though, much more than Stringer, he placed local content high on the needs for a broadcasting organisation. More pertinently, Sceats became director-general at a time when the NZBC was finally able to produce New Zealand-made drama. The change took place with the 1970 appointment of William Austin as the corporation's head of drama. His background was largely in radio and his assistant, with a special focus on television drama, was Douglas Drury. The appointments brought a new commitment not only to the production of drama but to New Zealand drama. As Austin explained, 'We will be doing the bulk of our staple diet in television drama from New Zealand sources. The reason for this is that television springs from the people of a country. It is a question of what the viewers will believe in television drama; and we must be very careful in embarkations into other countries' works.'⁹⁶

The first expression of this was in 1970 with the commissioning of *Pukemanu*, a six-part series set in a timber town. It screened in 1971 to an excellent public reaction from New Zealanders, who appreciated seeing themselves on screen, and a further series was made the following year. *Pukemanu* marked a growing confidence in an ability to portray everyday New Zealand life on television. Its production considerably enlarged the number of actors with television experience and also marked the emergence of Maori actors into New Zealand television. There were other productions. Many one-off plays were produced and an 11-episode series entitled *Section Seven*, centring on the probation service of the Department of Justice, screened in 1972.

Sceats's term also brought a new attitude to non-corporation New Zealand producers and an acceptance that other organisations could produce programmes for screening by the NZBC. Nineteen seventy-three saw the appearance of *The Years Back*, a 13-part series on New Zealand history, along with a highly regarded and influential drama/documentary on teenage pregnancy, *Gone Up North For a While*. Both came from the National Film Unit.

There were other productions from independent programme-makers. Ian Mune, ubiquitous in New Zealand film production but best known for his acting, and Roger Donaldson, soon to leave New Zealand for a career as a Hollywood film director, were the personalities behind Aardvark Films, which produced *Woman at the Store* in 1975 and, the following year, *Winners and Losers*, a series based on the works of New Zealand writers. These independent productions were preceded by Pacific Films' six-part *Tangata Whenua*, written by Michael King and screened in

1974. This series, the first to present an in-depth examination of Maori culture, could not have been made within the NZBC and was a triumphant recognition of the value of outside producers. But this acceptance of non-corporation productions did not last long. The financial difficulties that surfaced in broadcasting from the mid-1970s brought a retreat from local production in general and from the commissioning of works by independent programme-makers in particular.

The growing emphasis on local content in New Zealand broadcasting during Sceats's term as director-general was, for television especially, as much a matter of planning and intentions as of finished productions. The preparation time for drama productions meant that, ironically, the recognition for them went not to the NZBC but to its successor television corporations. One series commissioned during Sceats's time was *The Governor*, which did not screen until 1977 when it became the focus for an inquiry into the supposed financial failings of the then broadcasting administration.

The corporation's increase in New Zealand drama came too late to prevent local content being a recurring issue before the broadcasting authority's continuing inquiry into television services. There was a general concern that there was too little local content and that broadcasters should be required to include a certain amount of New Zealand-produced material. Actors' Equity, for example, not a disinterested body, called for an amount to be required and for that to be 60 per cent. The Associated Network submission called for a 20 per cent local quota but the Television Producers' and Directors' Association (TVPDA) estimated the existing New Zealand-produced content at 22 per cent of the 65 hours a week transmission, a figure with which the NZBC agreed. Most submissions supported a local quota. Without specifying a preferred percentage the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council also supported local quota, as did the Department of Internal Affairs on both radio and television. There was considerable agreement that the corporation did not want a substantial New Zealand content. Tom Finlayson, for instance, who had worked for three and a half years on *Town and Around* before starting work for the ABC in October 1969 as a television current affairs reporter and director, wrote two half-hour drama scripts and had them accepted by Channel 9 in Sydney three months after his arrival. He was clear that 'It would not have been possible to find a market for scripts such as these in New Zealand'.⁹⁷ Would it be possible to produce a substantial proportion of New Zealand content? The NZBC said no and was supported by such people as John Reid, Professor of English at the University of Auckland and also chairman of the Auckland Theatre Trust, who considered that New Zealand was not well supplied with good actors, dancers, musicians and other performers. Finlayson, however, considered that many performers and broadcasters had left New Zealand because they felt there was insufficient talent in the NZBC to run even that single channel. Given the opportunity, many



A scene from *Pukemanu*. NZMA

would return. Allan Martin, appearing for the Associated Network, agreed, providing the opportunities were present, by which he meant that there would need to be a networked second channel and pay rates freed from the strictures of the public service.

It was also contended that production of commercials for radio and, especially, television should be reserved for New Zealanders. In Australia, four years after television began there, it was legislated that all commercials must be made in Australia. A similar ban on imported commercials was sought in New Zealand, especially by the local production houses. The 10 major ones stated that they were operating at less than half capacity and argued, against the corporation, that they would be able to handle the increased demand if a ban on imports were introduced.

The legislative position on local content was equivocal. The 1961 act had no requirements on the topic and the 1968 act required the authority to make rules so that a prescribed proportion of items would be produced in New Zealand and as much matter made here as reasonably possible. The authority never quantified this proportion but in 1970, during the inquiry, did issue a rule that stations should broadcast New Zealand material as far as possible. In its 1971 report, the authority felt it was too early to recommend a particular percentage. With Avalon still uncompleted, the NZBC's chances of increasing local content were restricted and the authority regarded other matters as too indeterminate to risk requiring a specified local content. It acknowledged, for instance that enticing expatriate broadcasters to return to New Zealand depended, among other things, on free-



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'Rewi's Last Stand'

A scene from Rudall Hayward's *Rewi's Last Stand*. NZMA

ing corporation pay rates from the jurisdiction of the State Services Commission (SSC), but was not prepared to stipulate a local content percentage in anticipation of this happening.

The NZBA inquiry was of considerable interest to the country's would-be film-makers who saw the NZBC as determined to shut out not only other broadcasters but also film-makers other than those under its immediate control. Rudall Hayward, the doyen of New Zealand film-makers, had had such suspicions since 1963 when he offered the NZBC his children's film, *Little Shepherdesses*, which was about life on a New Zealand sheep farm. The film was rejected as 'too local' and though Hayward sold the film to the ABC, BBC, West German television and educational organisations in Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, it was never screened on television in his homeland. Hayward told the inquiry that in 10 years of New Zealand television he had sold only one film to the NZBC. This was *Rewi's Last Stand*, which he maintained was bought and televised only because of public pressure. Hayward's submission was an indictment of the NZBC purchasing policy, which offered to local film-makers substantially the same fees as the NZBC paid to the American and British suppliers of its majority offerings. This extremely favourable, to the

NZBC, pricing structure could be borne by foreign productions which had covered their costs in their country of origin, but it effectively prevented New Zealand's independent film-makers from ever recovering a reasonable proportion of their costs from the local market. Hayward noted, 'An organisation that offers for locally produced films only one tenth of the fee that its Australian counterpart is prepared to pay for foreign quota cannot claim to support independent production.' The NZBC policy effectively made private enterprise production for television in New Zealand impossible and helped maintain its monopoly position.⁹⁸

The authority's 1971 report called for the introduction of colour television and, within two years of that, the hearing of applications to start a second channel. It did not advocate any immediate action regarding local content though it did recommend that a quota for programmes produced in New Zealand be introduced 'as soon as is practicable' and increased as time went on.⁹⁹ It also called for talks to be held between interested parties to consider banning or limiting imported commercials. Nor did the 1971 report include a decision on the major issue of the allocation of the second television channel. This remained under consideration with a general expectation that there would be a decision at least before the 1972 general election. But there were further delays and the National government was defeated and replaced by Labour without the authority delivering a decision. Labour's election led to further changes in broadcasting administration, including the demise of the shortlived NZBA.

The considerable legal manoeuvring of those appearing before the authority did delay a decision in 1972, but the inquiry was forced into abeyance by another broadcasting *cause célèbre* and the start of a further inquiry, into the removal of the editor of the *Listener*.

THE *LISTENER* AND THE SACKING OF ALEXANDER MACLEOD

Alexander MacLeod was 32 when he joined the *Listener* in 1966 as associate editor and on 1 January 1968 he succeeded Monte Holcroft as editor. MacLeod had previously spent five years in England with *The Scotsman*, ending as its diplomatic correspondent. A New Zealander, he had edited *Canta*, the student newspaper, while he was at the University of Canterbury and then had a short-term commission with the New Zealand Army before becoming a features and leader writer for the *New Zealand Herald*. His journalism career, though relatively distinguished, was not extensive.

MacLeod's editorship was stormy from the start and his difficulties were first apparent in his relationship with Holcroft, whose early retirement followed his unsuccessful request that MacLeod's appointment be terminated while he was still a probationer. Substantial problems with *Listener* staff soon surfaced and continued during MacLeod's editorship.¹⁰⁰

Difficulties with his superiors soon followed and in 1970 Malcolm Rickard, the executive director, warned Stringer that he considered 'it extremely dangerous for any senior executive to have a discussion with Mr MacLeod without a third party present'.¹⁰¹ But it was his editorials that brought him into public prominence and final conflict with his employers.

Since 1956, *Listener* editorials had been the identifiable views of an individual. This practice was begun by Holcroft, who stated he was always aware of close political supervision both of the *Listener* and of the broadcasting service generally, but who wrote editorials first on capital punishment and then on Suez which expressed anti-government views. Yet the *Listener* was the official organ of the NZBS, a government department. Yates, then director, suggested that adding Holcroft's initials would indicate the views were personal rather than official; Holcroft felt this was reasonable.¹⁰² MacLeod extended this practice by signing his editorials with his full name. Whether this did indicate clearly that the views expressed were not necessarily those of the corporation was always contentious. At the later inquiry into MacLeod's dismissal, O. S. Hintz, a former *New Zealand Herald* editor, called signed editorials 'contrary to good newspaper practice' and argued 'the proprietor must accept responsibility for sponsoring such views by allowing the editor to promulgate them in editorials'.¹⁰³

During MacLeod's editorship, too, there were attempts, as there had been intermittently since the magazine began, to change the nature of the *Listener*. The NZBC audience research section's national survey in February-March 1969 concentrated on the *Listener* and concluded that, to improve circulation, there needed to be a shift in emphasis towards television programmes and personalities. Such views intensified over the next three years as the financial position of the NZBC worsened. James Collins, a board member, argued in 1972 'the format should be changed to a more popular-type magazine with the accent on programmes which are our "product"'.¹⁰⁴ MacLeod 'strongly resisted any suggestion of change in the *Listener* format'¹⁰⁵ and throughout his editorship was at odds with the board over the preferred focus for the magazine.

The *Listener* did change significantly under MacLeod's editorship. In many ways he did change to a more popular format as his board wished, giving greater attention to commercial broadcasting and introducing new and more popular topics, such as a regular sports page. But the major change was to lessen the attention to literary issues that had prevailed under Oliver Duff and Holcroft and to increase the focus on political and social issues. MacLeod was soon attacked by his employers for his editorials. Holcroft recorded that 'for eighteen years . . . I was left without interference to write as I pleased'¹⁰⁶ but MacLeod described his own experience as one of frequent pressure to modify his editorial stance. McFarlane, who liked MacLeod and regarded him as brilliant but over-inclined to venture into controversial areas, regularly discussed matters with him, as with other

senior executives, 'over a glass of whisky'. McFarlane saw MacLeod as fiercely independent but little different from radio and television producers, all of whom he considered felt they were required to do their job as they saw best. There were no convivial conversations between MacLeod and McKinnon. During the MacLeod furore, McKinnon unsuccessfully asked McFarlane to refute MacLeod's statement that he could talk to his previous chairman over a glass.¹⁰⁷ MacLeod stated he was often asked not to upset the corporation's chances of receiving the second television channel licence by writing editorials opposed to government policy. McKinnon acknowledged asking him not to 'rock the boat' on this matter.¹⁰⁸ Quite properly, this did not change MacLeod's editorial writing, which included positions contrary to government policy particularly concerning the Vietnam War and rugby relationships between New Zealand and South Africa. MacLeod's editorial expressions here were, in principle, no different from those of Holcroft, who also saw no need to automatically support government policy. The major difference, according to Holcroft, was 'one of spacing': MacLeod showed little readiness to make his controversial editorials infrequent. But times had changed. During the years of MacLeod's editorship the board felt the development of the NZBC, particularly the permission to begin a second television channel, was increasingly linked to the corporation's political stance and *Listener* editorials were among the activities that came under increasing board scrutiny. His editorials did not endear him to a board over-careful of government attitudes, but they were not the cause of MacLeod's downfall.

What MacLeod did that was new, and what brought him the particular opprobrium of the board, was to pen editorials criticising the NZBC itself. The first of these was written early in 1969, immediately before McKinnon's appointment, and dealt with regional reorganisation of the corporation's administration.¹⁰⁹ This was a matter of personal significance since the proposed restructuring included a change in MacLeod's own chain of responsibility: rather than being directly responsible to the director-general, he was to report via an executive director. This proposal was passed by the board but rescinded after strong protests from MacLeod, who remained responsible directly to the director-general.¹¹⁰ This editorial marked the start of a continuing tension between the board and the editor. The board's view was that because it owned the *Listener*, had appointed MacLeod and paid his salary, it had the right to dictate the terms of his employment — and these included an expectation that the *Listener* would not be antagonistic to the corporation. MacLeod saw matters differently; though his editorials were by no means invariably against the corporation, he reserved and at times exercised the right to criticise his employers.

The board restricted MacLeod's freedom of movement in mid-1969 when, on the advice of its management consultants, it resolved that 'by small steps' the *Listener* be changed to 'a broad appeal' journal with its

content solidly based on broadcasting and related cultural activities. One of these steps was that 'the editor should not comment on corporation policies but should have a free hand to discuss operational matters, for example, by including critiques of broadcast performances'.¹¹¹ MacLeod kept to these terms for some time, though a 1970 interview, in which J. V. Williams advocated the second television channel going to private enterprise, had board members 'querying why we should publicise views hostile to our interests'.¹¹²

There was considerable change in board personnel during MacLeod's time as *Listener* editor. In March 1971 three appointments were made to replace the retiring Saxton, Stock and Trimmer. The new men were James Collins, the merchandising manager for Skellerup Industries in Christchurch and also president of the Christchurch Operatic Society and a member of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, M. L. Tronson, an Auckland city councillor and ex-manager of the Auckland Symphonia, and B. E. Brill, a Wellington lawyer. The last appointment aroused the most comment because Brill was a member of the National Party and had former connections with the independent Hutt Broadcasting Co. At 30 he was the youngest ever director appointee and had expressed his preference for a competitive private television channel. When he joined the board, however, he quickly stated there was 'no room for competitive television in New Zealand except in a long term view'.¹¹³ The following year Price and Laurenson retired and were replaced by B. G. Cathie, a Wellington chartered accountant and director of several companies, and the Reverend Kingi Ihaka, the Auckland Maori missionary. At the same time McKinnon was appointed for a further three-year term.

The changes to the board made little difference to the worsening relationship with the *Listener* editor. In 1972 matters came to a head with two editorials strongly critical of the corporation. The first, dated 6 March, criticised the NZBC's censorship of a programme called *The Chicago Conspiracy*. McKinnon regarded being criticised 'in our own paper . . . [as] quite intolerable'. He reminded Sceats of his direct control of the editor and ended, 'I take it you can ensure there is no repetition of incidents of this kind in the future.'¹¹⁴

At this stage the board's view of MacLeod's editorial behaviour was entangled with its desire for a change in *Listener* format and on 27 April 1972 the *Listener* committee, a sub-committee of the board, decided to act. The committee also considered it 'quite unsatisfactory' to have editorial criticism of the NZBC in the *Listener* and proposed to the board that the *Listener* be turned into 'a popular magazine of good quality and not subject to criticism over controversial editorials'. Alternative recommendations were made regarding editorials. The first was that editorials be unsigned, regarded as an expression of NZBC policy and therefore requiring a close editorial supervision from the director-general. The board

rejected this recommendation in favour of the other, to cease editorials altogether. Noting that, in Britain, neither the *Listener* nor the *Radio Times* carried editorials, the committee recommended 'that the editor be advised the editorial is under review with a view to dropping it. But first the Board to hear the editor's comments'.¹¹⁵

So, at the board's invitation, MacLeod attended the *Listener* committee meeting in June where, according to committee members, he 'was hot in protest over any proposal to drop the editorial' and 'acted more as a counsel defending a client than as an officer or servant of the board'.¹¹⁶ He asked — demanded, said one board member — to be heard by the full board and was invited to attend the next meeting on 25 July 1972. In the interim MacLeod's lawyer informed the corporation that to drop the signed editorials would be to break the terms of the editor's appointment.¹¹⁷

Meanwhile one further issue intervened: MacLeod's editorial in the issue of 26 June 1972. It became his most celebrated. In it MacLeod addressed a television explanation of the government's Vietnam policy by defence minister Allan McCready. The latter had made yet another attack on the NZBC reporting of the conflict and said the best way for New Zealand to hear both sides of the Vietnam story would be to have another, opposing television organisation.¹¹⁸ McKinnon invited McCready to appear on television to defend the government's policy. The consequence was that the minister read to camera a statement that was screened not in a current affairs programme, but during the news, between the national and local bulletins. The reading, as the PSA president noted, 'was not subsequently "balanced" by anyone who was known to have opposing views'.¹¹⁹ MacLeod in his editorial was particularly critical of the failure to interview the minister. He contended that 'a senior politician demanded and obtained an opportunity to present to the viewing public an unedited account of what his advisors tell him is happening in Indochina'.¹²⁰ The board, at its meeting the day after the editorial appeared, regarded the words 'demanded and obtained' as totally incorrect and a serious falsehood. The matter was added to those already scheduled to be discussed with MacLeod at the July meeting.

MacLeod contended that McKinnon first invited the minister to be interviewed and then, after government pressure, allowed him to read a statement. McKinnon said that the invitation was always to make a statement rather than to be interviewed. Certainly McKinnon's letter invited McCready 'to speak on national television' and allotted 'up to ten minutes to follow the national news wherein the minister could make a statement'.¹²¹ But whether there had been any previous negotiation is difficult to tell.

In the end, neither MacLeod's editorials nor the *Listener* committee's proposals were discussed at the July board meeting. The date, coincidentally

and fatefully, was press day for the *Listener*, the busiest of the week. Invited to attend at 11am, MacLeod replied that he was too busy to come. Asked again before lunch, he again declined. As well as being occupied with *Listener* affairs that day, he did not wish to speak with the board until he received written replies to matters he had raised since the June meeting with the *Listener* committee. His second refusal to the board, received at 11.45am, argued that it was 'unreasonable of the board to ask me to answer further questions. . . . I wish to say nothing more.' By this time two board members, at least, wished to sack the editor but McKinnon, who showed much patience throughout the day, issued a written instruction that MacLeod appear at 2.30pm. Again he did not come and McKinnon issued another directive. This one was 'absolute and unqualified': MacLeod was 'to attend immediately'. Again MacLeod failed to appear but wrote to the board saying he would be able to attend at 4pm. By this stage the entire board's patience was exhausted and the editor was dismissed with immediate effect and given three months' pay in lieu of notice.¹²²

The following day the dismissal was a major story in all the daily newspapers and led to what the *Evening Post* called 'a first class political row'.¹²³ The considerable public discussion of the whole episode centred as much on the relationships between the board and the government as on MacLeod's actions. The independence of the corporation was questioned more than ever before and the government's opponents seized the election year opportunity to paint board members as puppets of a government bent on achieving a supportive and docile broadcasting environment. MacLeod saw his dismissal as the end result of 'mounting pressure from the NZBC concerning my editorials'¹²⁴ but others were quick to see the government as the main actor. An anonymous group of 'concerned broadcasting employees' argued that MacLeod was sacked because he dared to express opinions critical of the National government.¹²⁵ The next day the discussion entered the parliamentary arena during the address in reply debate. Norman Kirk remarked, 'It is curious that this man was dismissed on three months' notice . . . a period coinciding with the election campaign'.¹²⁶ Kirk then called for McKinnon's resignation, along with those of all board members known to be members of the National Party.¹²⁷ The political affiliations of board members became a public topic, the *Dominion* noting that only two of the board, James Collins and the Reverend Kingi Ihaka, 'are not open supporters of the National Party'.¹²⁸ Labour MP Arthur Faulkner said five members belonged to the National Party; three of them were dominion councillors.¹²⁹ Norman Kirk called the NZBC a monopoly which 'in its top stratum is subverting the public interest by falling into line either by direction or in anticipation of Government policy'.¹³⁰ Also questioned was the suitability of McKinnon, with both his military background and his National Party membership, to be head of a broadcasting organisation during the Vietnam War; the *Sunday Times* noted that the

'former Chief of General Staff had played a large part in sending the New Zealand contingent to Vietnam in the first place'.¹³¹ Sceats, though not McKinnon, faced up to the issue within his own organisation and appeared on *Gallery* to be questioned by David Exel. He denied that the board was making 'political editorial decisions' and most dailies were relieved that 'the NZBC did not dodge the issue'. But the programme and its aftermath kept the matter of political control to the fore, with the *Press* hoping 'that this particular issue of *Gallery* will go down as one of the influencing factors in a change of policy which resulted in boards, such as that controlling the corporation, being more balanced and representative of the community they serve'.¹³²

The whole affair was potentially extremely damaging politically to the government and a special Cabinet meeting on the evening of 1 August 1972 decided to hold a commission of inquiry into the dismissal. E. A. Lee, a retired stipendiary magistrate, was appointed to investigate whether the NZBC acted properly in the dismissal, whether any political interference or influence was brought to bear and whether the corporation was influenced by political opinions or considerations. The inquiry was a well-publicised affair with many more submissions than were envisaged. Seventeen hundred pages of transcript of the verbatim proceedings were recorded and the reporting date was extended by a month to 13 October 1972. Considerable criticism of the board and the government was given a full airing. Typical were the PSA submissions which stated that MacLeod's summary dismissal, although legal, was a denial of natural justice. The association considered that political considerations did influence the board's decision and argued that the political sympathies of 'at least four and possibly five out of seven board members' were such as to cause them 'extreme irritation if not anger' at being associated with MacLeod's editorial views, 'particularly in an election year'.¹³³

Lee's report exonerated both the government and the corporation. He found no evidence that the government was involved or that the board was motivated by political considerations. He had one criticism of the corporation, namely that the board had made 'a serious error of judgement' in not informing MacLeod, as the events of 25 July progressed, that the emphasis was changing from a consideration of the *Listener* editorials to that of MacLeod's defiance. But his major criticisms were of the editor who both 'displayed a lack of loyalty . . . [and] was in breach of the Board's directives'. He regarded MacLeod's reasons for failing to attend the board on 25 July 'as most unconvincing and unsatisfactory. I am certain that he had made up his mind not to attend'.¹³⁴ Lee felt the board had no option but to dismiss an editor who so challenged its authority.

There is no evidence to support the worst of the allegations, that board members were prepared to accept government directives to support the party in power. On the contrary, the evidence is that board

members acted as they independently thought fit. But the whole affair emphasised the fact that the government regarded membership of its party and sympathy towards its cause as useful if not essential traits for board appointees. Whether or not board members were independent, the dismissal of MacLeod and the aftermath of the affair indicated that, unlike Caesar's wife, they were not seen to be pure. MacLeod's dismissal and the following furore were of no political assistance to the government: it is difficult to argue with Muldoon's view that 'anyone who thinks that to sack the editor of the *Listener* four months before an election is favouring the Government is out of his mind'.¹³⁵

With MacLeod's departure the board needed to make arrangements to continue the *Listener*. Its actions and Lee's exoneration of them clearly indicated the limitations to editorial freedom in the *Listener*. The board's immediate action was 'to suspend editorials in the meantime'¹³⁶ but it did not take the opportunity to make this permanent or to alter the focus of the paper. Holcroft agreed to return from retirement on a temporary basis until a permanent replacement could be found. He had been sounded out by Sceats some 18 months earlier as to whether he would return temporarily were MacLeod to be suddenly removed. He resumed editing the *Listener* and writing editorials, the first appearing in the edition of 7 August 1972. Only one issue, that of 1 August 1972, appeared without an editorial.

The major result of the whole episode was that Labour, by the end of the year the newly elected government, became committed to changing the structure of broadcasting's administration. No definite rearrangements were announced but the sacking of the *Listener* editor brought fierce and public criticism by Labour of both the government's control of broadcasting and the board's relationship with the government. What Norman Kirk and his third Labour government planned for broadcasting was awaited with interest.

5

COMPETITIVE CORPORATIONS

TV1, TV2, RNZ

The third Labour government's manifesto had included plans to introduce both colour television and a second channel before the 1975 election. Prime Minister Norman Kirk also made it clear that a second channel would be under public ownership and that it would be run by the NZBC.¹ But sanguine corporation executives were abruptly disillusioned. Immediately after the Christmas vacation Sceats was called into the office of Roger Douglas, the new broadcasting minister, who read a statement to the director-general. 'Halfway through I said, "Look, Roger, I don't know if I can believe my ears. Would you mind reading it from the start again."' The statement was made public the same night. Sceats says, 'A shudder went right through the responsible people, the top echelon, in broadcasting. I have no doubt there were shrieks of delight in lower echelons.'²

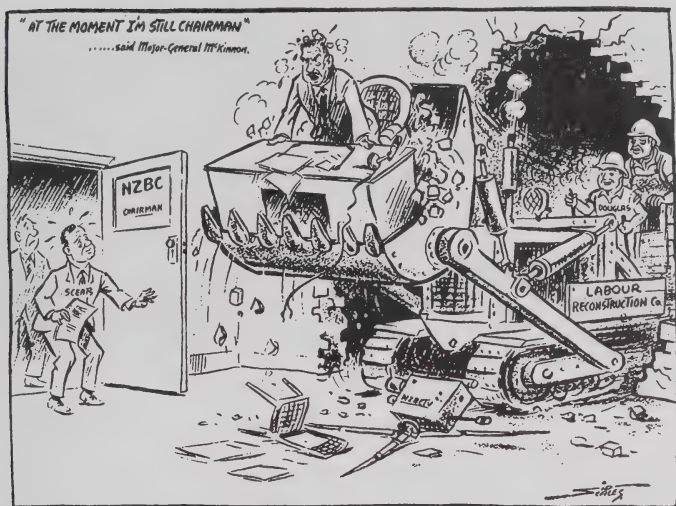
Douglas, an accountant by training, was new to ministerial posts and the youngest member of the Cabinet. Kirk began his term prepared to allow his ministers to develop their own ideas and Douglas took full advantage of the opportunity. He began a new system of broadcasting administration that attempted to introduce competition among broadcasters while retaining Labour's refusal of private enterprise. Broadcasting was not a topic to which he had paid concerted attention while a backbencher, focusing instead on industrial and financial matters, but as soon as he was given the portfolio he decided that competition was necessary for the second television channel and therefore, though his party required it to be publicly owned, that owner should not be the NZBC, an organisation Douglas considered was too big already. Over the next weeks he added another decision: that radio had suffered during the NZBC years from an increasing domination by television and needed to be free from its controlling influence. The statement Douglas read to Sceats signalled a rearrangement of New Zealand broadcasting that meant nothing less than the end of the NZBC. A second television channel would be introduced and would be state-owned. The NZBC was to be broken into three distinct corporations: the Corporation of Radio New Zealand would control all the radio stations

held by the NZBC; Television Service One would control the existing channel; Television Service Two would control the forthcoming second channel. A fourth body, the Broadcasting Council of New Zealand, was to oversee the performances of the three broadcasting corporations and to co-ordinate matters that affected them all.

Over the Christmas vacation Douglas prepared a well-developed paper that was accepted by Kirk and his Cabinet colleagues in January 1973. There was little prior consultation. In particular, Douglas sought no advice from the NZBC, deliberately keeping its senior officials out of the considerations 'because the bureaucracy would have got to work and maybe I wouldn't have got my scheme through'.³ In what became a pattern during his ministerial career, Douglas, without warning, introduced a fundamental change that did not feature in his party's election platform, and yet was almost complete when announced and subject to little subsequent amendment. This method of policy implementation would later be described as a blitzkrieg approach.⁴ It began with the 1973 Broadcasting Act.

Douglas stated, 'I never consulted the boss . . . Fortunately he seemed to like what I had written.'⁵ Norman Kirk may not have been consulted about Douglas's proposal but when informed of it he was supportive and the plan was approved. Although it went against Kirk's November statement that the second channel would go to the NZBC, the Douglas scheme very much suited the Labour government. A return to government department status for broadcasting was not politically tenable after Labour's trenchant criticisms of National's increasing political control of broadcasting. Yet Labour's election victory was not greeted with the expected resignations of McKinnon and his board; McKinnon made it clear he intended to remain in his post. The Douglas proposal offered a way through the impasse. It retained public ownership through corporation control yet discarded the board appointees and pushed aside the senior executives within the corporation. Seats was due to retire and that fact made the dismantling of the NZBC easier. What Labour regarded as a tainted corporation had little chance to influence the new system.

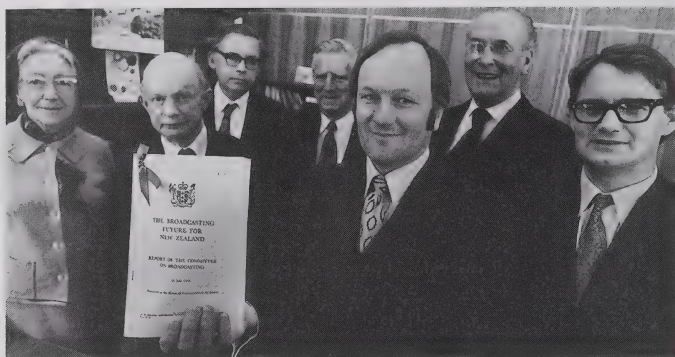
Douglas pre-empted the still unannounced decision of the Broadcasting Authority. That was finally given in March 1973 and Gordon Dryden's Independent Television Corporation was awarded a warrant to open the second television channel. Labour's opposition to private broadcasting meant it was an empty victory with no chance of becoming reality. Dryden had faced difficulties in National, Labour and corporation circles. He had been regarded with suspicion within the NZBS and NZBC for years because of his earlier work for the left-leaning daily, the *Southern Cross*. He was described in Parliament by one National member as a 'publicist for the Labour Party'.⁶ But Dryden had also had problems with Labour, particularly since the 1966 general election. His public relations firm, Ord-Dryden, had been hired by the party for that year's election but



Sid Scales sees McKinnon's retirement greeted happily by Kirk and Douglas.
 OTAGO DAILY TIMES

Dryden's differences with Kirk and Norman Douglas, party leader and president respectively, had led to the assignment being terminated secretly eight weeks before the election.⁷ Whichever party won the 1972 election, he would not have been well regarded by either National or Labour. The NZBA's decision did not mean Dryden could start a second channel: he still needed an import licence to get the necessary equipment and a government instruction to the NZBC to share its transmission facilities. It was made clear that neither would be given. Douglas and Dryden made a compensation deal in which Dryden, who agreed not to uplift his warrant, was awarded \$50,000, an amount Dryden calculated gave himself \$8,000 for his own endeavours, and the government had use of the considerable material Dryden had amassed while preparing his application. Dryden later reported that none of this material was ever taken, let alone used.⁸

Announced at the start of 1973, the new structure was introduced as soon as possible. A Committee on Broadcasting, under the chairmanship of Kenneth Adam, director of BBC television from 1961 to 1968, was established at the end of March and directed to report within four months. It had two tasks: to prepare a White Paper on the way the publicly owned but competitive system could be put into effect, and to draft the necessary legislation. Interviewed extensively on his arrival, Adam acknowledged he



Roger Douglas receiving the report from the Committee on Broadcasting.
DOMINION

did not know of any country with the type of broadcasting structure proposed for New Zealand.⁹ But he clearly supported the general proposal. The report was completed on time and presented on 31 July 1973. The *Otago Daily Times* summarised the process and the result. 'Within the rather narrow confines of its brief the Committee on Broadcasting has produced a predictable White Paper largely supporting the policy formulated by Roger Douglas.'¹⁰ The committee was regarded by NZBC journalists as a 'rubber-stamp' committee that merely gave a seal of approval to the Douglas plan.¹¹ Although it would have been absurd for Labour to fill the committee with people who would not accept or follow its broadcasting plan, the final report was notable for its speed of preparation and its fidelity to Douglas's proposal. Difficulties with the scheme, particularly those to do with shared services and news gathering, were left to be confronted later. On the other hand, a strength of the Adam committee's report was its approach to broadcasting finances. It advocated that some costs, such as the National Orchestra, the shortwave broadcasts and education programmes, should be transferred to other government departments and, especially, that the new structure should be permitted to borrow to finance development. In principle, these suggestions solved the basic difficulties of the NZBC which, required to finance development from current revenue, had always teetered on a financial razor-edge. The report included draft legislation so the 1973 Broadcasting Act was introduced on 12 September and given its third reading on 21 November.

The Broadcasting Authority, which Douglas saw as tainted by the length of the second channel hearing, was discarded. Some of its responsibilities were given to the council: the powers to make rules for pro-

grammes and to ensure that all warrant holders complied with the rules and the terms of their warrants. The council was to report to the minister any station it considered in breach of these directives. But because the government retained the traditional Labour dislike for private broadcasters and did not want to increase their number, the authority's power to issue new warrants was not transferred. No new warrants were to be granted to private stations and the renewal of existing warrants was a matter for ministerial decision. Further, though Labour accepted the political necessity of private stations and allowed the existing ones to continue, it hampered their development by including in the act a denial of permission for any networking among the private stations.

SSC AND PSA

Soon after the new system was announced, Sceats asked Douglas for urgent clarification regarding his staff's 'existing rights and privileges'. Douglas replied that he foresaw no redundancies and otherwise assumed Sceats referred to 'superannuation, leave and the like', all of which the government respected and would ensure were transferred to the new corporations. But he did not wish the existing public service conditions of employment, especially its pay scale system, to continue. He drew attention to the 1968 Royal Commission of Inquiry into Salary and Wage Fixing Procedures in the New Zealand State Services which recommended repeal of the requirement that NZBC pay and conditions be determined in agreement or consultation with the State Services Commission (SSC). Douglas wanted provision for specialist promotion on merit rather than seniority, particularly in the creative field, without any obligation that such provisions apply in other areas.¹² This was reflected in the act. The 1961 requirement had been that salaries and allowances were fixed in agreement with the Public Services Commission; the 1973 legislation stipulated that they would be fixed after consultation with the SSC (as the Public Services Commission had been renamed). Douglas pursued this in a December 1973 meeting with the newly appointed members of the council and corporations. He did not want the corporations' right to hire conditioned by the public service system of seniority. He also discussed the place of the PSA in the new structures, making clear his own view that there was no room in the new organisation for the existing appeals system.¹³

But the minister had only limited success in this area. Staff appointments and independence from the SSC were discussed at the council's second meeting which was also attended by the chairman of the SSC, I. G. Lythgoe. He acknowledged that the act allowed appointments of directors-general at such terms and conditions as the corporations thought fit, but he felt he was under an obligation to report to the government if he considered the proposed salaries and allowances to be out of step with pre-

vailing rates. For all other employees the act required consultation. Although this was a step down from agreement, the broadcasting council chairman said he would prefer to be in agreement with the SSC.¹⁴ In practice the two government-controlled wage and salary fixing agencies, the SSC and the Higher Salaries Commission, continued to dominate broadcasting pay scales. When, for example, the Higher Salaries Commission refused to apply the late 1975 2.5 per cent increase to the salaries of the three directors-general, the council accepted the verdict.¹⁵ The power of the PSA to control employment arrangements remained largely undented and the possibilities of employing staff on contract were much limited. This was quantified in 1974 when an agreement was struck with the PSA to limit contract employment to 7.5 per cent of the workforce. Despite causing continuing friction with broadcasting authorities, this agreement held until the ending of the BCNZ in 1988.¹⁶

COUNCIL AND CORPORATIONS APPOINTMENTS

The appointments to the new council and corporations were announced in December. Sir Alister McIntosh, a former head of the Prime Minister's Department, ambassador to Rome and, from 1943 to 1966, head of the Department of External Affairs, became chairman of the council. With him were the Reverend W. F. Ford, the senior Wellington Methodist minister, and Christine Cole Catley, a journalist and, before this appointment, the redoubtable television critic for the *Dominion*. R. G. Collins, a Wellington lawyer, was appointed chairman of the TV1 corporation and with him were M. P. Whatman, a journalist, and A. J. (Tony) Neary, the first trade unionist appointed to such a position. TV2 was headed by George Fraser, vice-president of the Auckland Manufacturers' Association, associate director of industrial relations at the Fletcher group of companies and the man who chose most of that group's excellent and extensive collection of New Zealand art. He was joined by Dr Ruth Black, an Auckland medical practitioner who had been appointed to the NZBC board the previous April, and R. A. Young, a lawyer and chairman of the NZBC Southern Region Programme Advisory Committee. The RNZ corporation was headed by P. J. Downey, the lawyer who represented Alexander MacLeod during his later time with the NZBC. With him were Mira Szaszy, the dominion president of the Maori Women's Welfare League, and Ian Breward, professor of church history at Otago University.

The new Broadcasting Act came into force on 18 December 1973 with the council holding its first meeting on that date. But it did not mean rapid change. Douglas wanted the second channel transmitting, at least in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, before the abolition of the NZBC. Following this lead, McIntosh announced there was no immediate need to dismember the NZBC and McKinnon estimated that the corpora-

tion would continue for 'most of next year if not longer'.¹⁷ In fact, it was longer: TV2 did not begin transmitting until mid-1975. The NZBC was abolished from 1 April 1975, the day Lionel Sceats began his retirement. Although, in theory, public broadcasting was headed by two organisations with overlapping responsibilities until that date, in practice this was avoided with the reconstitution of the NZBC board from 1 February 1974. McKinnon retired on that date when his five-year appointment expired and the entire NZBC board was replaced by the 12 members of the boards of the new council and corporations. As if to highlight the continuing existence and prowess of the NZBC, the passage of the Broadcasting Act was followed almost immediately by the 1974 Commonwealth Games, an event that gave both the NZBC and New Zealand wide international recognition.

THE 1974 COMMONWEALTH GAMES

The tenth Commonwealth Games were held in Christchurch over 10 days from 24 January to 2 February 1974. Their televising was easily the largest undertaking handled by the NZBC. Telecasts were required at seven different locations from the main stadium at Queen Elizabeth II Park, to the Cashmere Hills, the route of the cycle road race, to the Christchurch International Airport for the Queen's arrival. Filming was done at a further four locations and radio was involved everywhere.

The games coverage involved 369 New Zealand broadcasters, plus a further 135 from other countries. Two of the New Zealanders, Ash Lewis and Harold Anderson, are of particular importance. Lewis had joined the NZBS as a technical cadet in 1939. He worked his way through the ranks and in 1961 moved from radio to television by being appointed operations supervisor at WNTV1. He had experience in the New Zealand coverage of previous Commonwealth and Olympic Games back to the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. His planning for the 1974 games began in London in 1970. He was editing the BBC's coverage of the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games when the announcement was made that the next games would be held in Christchurch. Noel Palmer, director of television, was also there and arranged for Lewis to stay on in London and discuss the BBC planning for the 1970 games. Lewis prepared a blueprint of what was required for games coverage, including the requirements of overseas organisations. This became the basis for planning which, back in New Zealand, was done at the regional level, in Christchurch. In April 1972 Lewis was appointed operations manager for the Commonwealth Games broadcasts. At the time he was the Avalon development officer and combined the two tasks for the rest of 1972. By the end of that year he and his family had moved to Christchurch and he was full-time games operations manager from then on.

Harold Anderson returned to New Zealand in 1972. He had started his

television career in his homeland but moved to England, where he was a production assistant with BBC television, working on the Saturday sports programme, *Grandstand*. Lewis saw it as a stroke of good fortune to have someone with Anderson's experience available. Anderson was posted to Christchurch soon after returning to the NZBC with the intention that he would be the producer for the games coverage, much of which was modelled on *Grandstand*.

One problem for broadcasters was that the games lasted for only 10 days; they were often referred to as 'the 10-day wonder'. This meant that everything had to be planned on a temporary basis yet, at the same time, New Zealand and international expectations, plus the corporation's prestige, demanded that the highest standards be achieved. The logistics of preparation were on a scale beyond anything the NZBC had attempted. Merely arranging transport for the many broadcasters to and from the different sports venues spread about Christchurch was a major organisational job. Space had to be found for many facilities. The squash courts under the QEII grandstand, for instance, were turned into nine radio studios and apportioned among the various Commonwealth broadcasting organisations to transmit material live, crossing back and forth to the different venues, for hours on end.

For New Zealand television, the games were the spur to introduce colour television. Most of the events were televised in colour. Ash Lewis reports that BBC officials, when asked whether New Zealand should film the games in black and white or colour, answered, 'What a quaint idea to do it in black and white.'¹⁸ That reaction swayed the New Zealand debate strongly in favour both of filming the games in colour and of introducing general colour television transmission earlier. When colour television was introduced on 31 October 1973 53 per cent of the population, those receiving their signal from the Waiatarua, Te Aroha and Sugarloaf transmitters, received a colour signal. A further 15 per cent of the population changed to colour reception early in 1974 and the change was completed in 1975. Colour television was inevitable eventually, but the games were the important factor in the timing of its introduction. In the end, colour was not possible for all coverage: wrestling, weightlifting and badminton were filmed in monochrome. In retrospect, this was unfortunate as the weightlifting, in particular, was a highly popular television spectacle. But colour television was given a significant boost, with hirings and sales of sets climbing before and during the games.

The games and their broadcasting were a wonderful success. There was an early New Zealand success when, on the first day of competition, Richard Tayler won the 10,000 metres. This encouraged a national enthusiasm and increased patronage. Ash Lewis remembers, 'People went crazy after Dick Tayler's win. The next day there were big queues in Cathedral Square buying tickets.'¹⁹



The Christchurch station receives a very large video tape recorder, delivered by crane, in time for the 1974 Commonwealth Games.
NATIONAL ARCHIVES,
AADL941/1B

The NZBC facilities were stretched to the limit by the demands of the games. There was, for instance, only the one television microwave circuit from Christchurch to Auckland and this was in daily use by the NZBC. So the BBC and CBC had to wait until after the nightly closedown before they could send their programmes to Auckland and on, via satellite, to their home countries. But with few exceptions, the television and radio coverage drew praise and the technical facilities provided for visiting broadcasters generally received favourable comment.

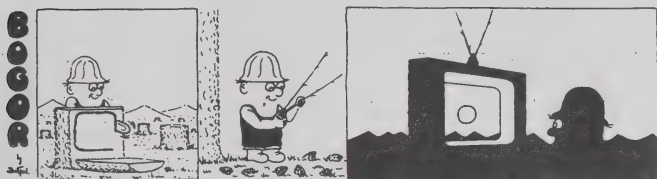
In spite of the praise, though, there were real difficulties with the broadcasting and lessons to be learnt. Too much new equipment was commissioned too late. And the fact that the games were staged only three months after the NZBC began colour transmission meant staff were still trying to absorb the new techniques associated with colour.²⁰ On the other hand, there were significant long-term benefits for New Zealand television. The games were the catalyst that pushed the government into allowing the change to colour television and that change, plus the games themselves,

led to the purchase of considerable amounts of new broadcasting equipment. For the first time since the start of television in New Zealand, broadcasters were able to work with state-of-the-art equipment. For New Zealand sports broadcasting in particular, the games were a coming of age. They showed the broadcasters' ability on an international stage and they grew in stature and confidence as a result. The games coverage also heightened the expectations for sports broadcasting; broadcasters and audiences alike realised new standards were possible and in the future would not be satisfied with less.

IAN CROSS AND THE *LISTENER*

The Broadcasting Council eventually took control of the *Listener*, but the NZBC remained in charge for all of 1973 and, after the removal of McLeod, needed to find a new editor. Ian Cross, making his return to journalism, became editor in July 1973.²¹ His credentials were as impressive as any of his predecessors' and he was well regarded as an author. He had the necessary background in journalism, gained during his early career, and he added to it with considerable experience, and a good reputation in, broadcasting, particularly scriptwriting and current affairs television. When, in 1967, Parkinson was planning to start the radio current affairs programme *Checkpoint*, he wrote, 'The approach I am advocating presupposes the availability of journalists and interviewers of the Ian Cross calibre.'²² Equally importantly, Cross's immediate past experience was 'years in the marketing and advertising business'. He came to the *Listener* at a time when it was relatively autonomous. The NZBC board, in an interregnum state, was of little influence. Certainly MacLeod had been fired, but Cross regarded this as turning the *Listener* into 'a stinging nettle for any bureaucratic hands in a dying administration'. He was given the freedom to 'run a one-man band'.²³ An initial threat hanging over him was the prospect of moving the magazine to Auckland. The Adam report recommended this on various grounds, but particularly because the magazine would be closer to its printer, Auckland-based Wilson & Horton. For the committee, Wellington had 'a relation to the arts, commerce, industry, and the land' that is 'administrative, fiscal and critical rather than one of personal involvement'.²⁴ The proposal, which came from Roger Douglas, was, in Cross's view, 'quite silly', and it came to nothing. Cross ignored the recommendation and the board never mentioned it.²⁵

For all his cultural credentials, Cross was the editor who completed the shift of the *Listener* from its position as a beacon of high cultural values to that of a wide-ranging magazine with an emphasis on broadcasting and New Zealand society. In the process he introduced a new dynamism to New Zealand journalism and took the *Listener* to an unprecedented level of commercial success. For Cross, the magazine's pages were shadowed by



Burton Silver in the *Listener*, 22 January 1977.

'predictable and pedestrian attitudes of mind'.²⁶ Big changes followed his appointment. In the autobiography of his broadcasting years Cross mentioned Tom Scott, Rosemary McLeod and Burton Silver as his most popularly successful staff additions. The three epitomised Cross's influence: there was no wholesale lowering of the *Listener's* cultural tone but rather a refocusing on New Zealand concerns. In a letter to Sargeson, Cross considered New Zealanders were becoming 'a confused fragmented people' and his 'temporary conceit' was that the *Listener* could show 'a way through the mess'.²⁷ Not all would agree with the diagnosis and, even so, the ambition was too large for a single magazine. But the new approach struck a responsive chord. The literary tradition of the *Listener* was not abandoned — poetry and short stories continued to be published — but there was a fresh emphasis on New Zealand television and on commercial broadcasting generally. Much of the earlier disdain for commercial broadcasting had been retained until Cross decisively crossed this divide, for both philosophical and soundly financial reasons. He had the good fortune to become editor as the second channel started: now that there was a choice of programmes, more people were likely to buy the *Listener* to check out the options.

Cross put a New Zealand subject on the cover as often as possible, starting early with an issue that included a profile and cover photo of the television current affairs interviewer, David Exel, an emphasis that raised eyebrows among the older broadcasting hands.²⁸ In spite of his reluctance to move the *Listener* to Auckland, Cross was not antagonistic to the northern city. Realising its importance in terms of circulation, he focused the magazine's content on Auckland at least in proportion to that city's population. During his editorship the *Listener* more than doubled its circulation of 130,000. The 19 July 1976 issue, which featured a guide to the Olympic Games, sold 306,215 copies, a record for any New Zealand publication. Commercial success accompanied the increased circulation and under Cross the *Listener's* annual profitability increased tenfold from \$32,000 to \$322,000.²⁹

Its monopoly right to publish programme information more than 24

hours in advance gave the *Listener* a huge and valuable commercial asset. This monopoly had become even more valuable with the advent of the second channel. Newspaper interests had tried to obtain similar privileges in the past and such calls were renewed as Cross took the *Listener* to an unprecedented profitability. During the term of the Broadcasting Council, however, such requests fell on deaf ears. The main attempt came from INL, which in December 1976 proposed publishing a *TV Week* and giving the council a minimum royalty payment of \$20,000 a year for the right to publish the necessary programme information. This was declined with a full defence of the traditional broadcasting view. Not only should no assistance be given to a competitor but the *Listener* occupied a unique position in New Zealand journalism which should not be imperilled. Its copyright on programme information enabled it to maintain a quality of feature writing not available elsewhere.³⁰ This was the last time that view clearly prevailed.

AVALON

On 21 June 1973 Lionel Sceats topped off a 10-storey tower block, signalling the completion of structural work on all the major buildings at Avalon. The total cost for the complex was \$9 million, which included \$4 million worth of equipment. The corporation noted that, like all its other installations and operations, Avalon had been financed entirely from revenue.³¹ It was almost two more years before the complex was occupied and in use and even then it was not ready. As always, political pressure was involved: Avalon had to be operating before the November 1975 election so it opened on 1 April that year. The opening two-hour live broadcast was full of fluffed lines, faulty microphones and camera failures. Bill Alexander recalls, 'We had wiring lying in the corridors. We had studios that were unusable . . . We had a lot of problems.'³²

The many teething problems were eventually overcome and a number of fine productions came out of Avalon. In many cases the excellent facilities were used to good effect. Avalon serialised *Close To Home*, it produced a series of excellent light entertainment programmes of talent quests and song quests and it handled election night broadcasts and other major events well. But even if the NZBC had remained in sole control there were doubts about the suitability of the complex. The Adam committee confessed 'to some anxiety over Avalon, its size and its cost, which could be described as out of touch with New Zealand realities'.³³ The committee's anxieties were enhanced by the fact that Avalon was planned for an NZBC controlling all New Zealand's television production and transmission; the situation was now very different.

Avalon presented problems for the new order. It was envisaged and constructed as the dominating center of a cohesive national broadcasting organisation; by the time it was ready, broadcasting was being run by

regionally based separate and competing corporations. Because of its location, Avalon was useful only to TV1 and, even then, it was much grander than necessary. But, as the Adam committee noted, Avalon was 'a giant reality', and TV1, based in Wellington and Dunedin, would be its user. Roger Douglas also assumed that Avalon would be used mainly by TV1; the surplus space and capacity could be hired out to film companies.³⁴ Adam argued that both television corporations should use Avalon for their news but accepted that otherwise 'the occasions when TV2 can be expected to employ these splendid facilities will be few and far between'. Because, in spite of its cost, Avalon was not available to the Auckland- and Christchurch-based TV2, more facilities were required for the new channel. Adam saw no need to embark on a 'mini Avalon' in Auckland but TV2 had urgent requirements. The release of Adam's report was accompanied by government approval for the NZBC to spend \$1.3 million on re-equipping the Auckland Shortland Street studios. For TV2 Adam also pointed to the existing Christchurch studio, the new town hall in Christchurch and the television studio in Hamilton.³⁵ The Adam committee advocated the spending of another \$1 million to give TV2 two OB vans and 10 colour film cameras equipped for sound. The intention was that TV1, with Avalon, would concentrate on studio production and that TV2 would compensate for its lack of studio facilities by taking advantage of Auckland's climate and geography and emphasise outside broadcasts.

THREE DIRECTORS-GENERAL

One of the Broadcasting Council's early tasks was the appointment of separate directors-general for the three corporations. Fifty-nine-year-old James L. Hartstonge filled the top position in Radio New Zealand (RNZ). He had spent his working life in New Zealand broadcasting, beginning in 1932 as an office junior at 4YA when he left school. He was a junior announcer by the time he was 18 and, after war service, declined an appointment in the technical field to become a programmer instead. His career included many innovations such as preparing New Zealand's first studio-produced programmes and writing the NZBS's first presentation manual. He also spent some years on the periphery of broadcasting as concert manager for the symphony orchestra. Returning fully to broadcasting he was, by the 1970s, the senior radio broadcaster after Sceats, and the obvious appointee to the position as RNZ director-general. His experience was in non-commercial radio but the appointment also put him in charge of the commercial stations. His assistant directors-general were George Sanders and Geoffrey Whitehead. The latter, from the BBC, had applied for the director-generalship but accepted the position of assistant. He succeeded to the top position when Hartstonge retired in 1976.

Hartstonge made it clear that his 'first priority' was 'getting the YC pro-

gramme out to more people'.³⁶ This desire was reflected at the 1 April 1975 opening of RNZ when the YC stations were renamed the Concert Programme and had their hours extended to include mornings. The programme opened at 6am, closed down at 10.30am and reopened at 5pm, with transmissions ending at midnight. With this extension of hours Hartstonge separated the two non-commercial networks, the National and Concert Programmes, by emphasising the talk aspects of the National Programme and the music orientation of the Concert Programme. As in the past, the commercial stations were to continue to act as community stations.

There was considerable speculation about who would head the television corporations; the names of Gordon Dryden and Austin Mitchell were often mentioned.³⁷ There was no consultation with Sceats about personnel for the senior positions in the new structure. Sceats, a public servant content to implement his government's plan regardless of personal disagreement, felt this impugned his integrity. Although cut out of the decision-making, he was well aware of the likely contenders and sure who would take the top positions. He warned the general manager of the ABC, his Australian counterpart, that he would be losing Allan Martin and Alan Morris, at the time the heads of the ABC's public affairs television and television entertainment departments, respectively. 'It was obvious to me these were two New Zealanders who were most likely to be contenders and if they applied, they would get the jobs.'³⁸

Martin and Morris were appointed, Morris as director-general of TV1 and Martin to the same position in TV2. Many were interviewed for the positions but Martin and Morris, asked to apply by the chairmen of their respective boards, were always front runners. For both men the return to New Zealand was a combination of an exciting opportunity — the new jobs were a step up — and a call to duty. Neither had previous experience of working with a board but they realised they were the only New Zealanders who had the necessary experience and were the right age.

Martin and Morris were friends and colleagues with years of experience of working together. A decade earlier they were the two men best positioned to understand and feel the frustrations of television production in New Zealand. Now they determined to seize their chance and take New Zealand television to a new level. Their personal relationship was important in that they maintained close contact throughout their time as directors-general, never writing each other a memo but discussing and settling their joint concerns.³⁹ Such mutual trust greatly assisted the relationship between the two corporations and gave Martin and Morris considerable ability to impose their own broadcasting styles even when these differed from the aims of Labour and the Adam committee. Before returning to New Zealand, the two met at Pacific Palms in Sydney and, as Morris stated, determined 'the blue print for television in New Zealand . . . Everything was worked out at Pacific Palms'. This was a fateful meeting.

They not only decided such matters as which people they would have in which positions, but also determined the style of television they wanted. Both men felt Labour's system was greatly flawed but that they could make something of it. Their model was a remix of Labour's desired blend of competition and complementarity in which the emphasis was on competition. Martin and Morris intended to introduce two mainstream television channels, each exuberantly competing for the mass audience.

TV1 AND TV2

TV2 began transmissions on 30 June 1975. At his December 1973 meeting with the members of the council and corporations, Douglas had requested all urgency to obtain the necessary equipment and personnel for the second channel. Establishing TV2's coverage was a matter of completing the preparations long planned for on the existing transmission sites used by TV1. Considerable site testing had been done for TV1 coverage and TV2 benefited from the infrastructure, especially roading, that was already in place. Even so, providing a nationwide transmission system took the greatest time and determined when TV2 could start broadcasting. It was an enormous task to replicate, at speed, a system that had originally taken most of the 1960s to complete. The establishment of TV2's coverage was divided into stages, with stage one being the sites where TV1 had its seven large transmitters. As with most large engineering projects, there were difficulties. Delays in commissioning the Te Aroha transmitter and defects in the Sugarloaf aerial meant that the opening transmissions on 30 June 1975 were limited. The plan had been to open when TV2 could broadcast in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, but transmission began with what the council referred to as one and a half transmitters rather than the planned three. Only Waiatarua was fully operational. Fortunately this was the one that gave TV2 access to Auckland, the largest market, but still the problems meant heavy financial losses. For Canterbury, Sugarloaf was not ready for full transmission until October 1975. That month, however, problems were found with the Kaukau aerial system and Wellington transmissions began only days before the election in November. The main seven transmitters were all in operation by May 1976. In spite of the obstacles, and though the completion took longer than planned, the stage one coverage was done with considerable speed and Fraser, the TV2 chairman, congratulated the engineers involved on what he saw as a tremendous achievement.⁴⁰

Increasing TV2 coverage led to a similar attitude to private translators as the NZBC had shown a decade earlier. The Cabinet Works Committee expressed its unhappiness with the \$5.2 million estimate for extending TV2 coverage and wanted the plans revised. This led to a change of approach in which the council welcomed private translator societies under various conditions. Council staff would operate and maintain the private

translators and meet these costs but the television societies had to pay for equipment and installation. The translators had to be sited alongside the corresponding permanent TV1 transmitter and use the channel and aerial polarisation allocated for the future permanent TV2 translator for that site. Private translators for TV2 were not allowed where there was no permanent TV1 coverage.⁴¹ As with the original TV1 coverage, TV2's spread was hastened by considerable local private activity to bring the new channel to individual communities immediately.

TV2, loath to accept a permanent lack of studio facilities, turned its attention to Tank Farm, a property at Northcote in Auckland inherited from the NZBC. In April 1975 it reported to the council that it had surveyed the property with a view to long-term development. The council agreed and in June undertook to develop a site plan for the area.⁴² Although not intended to be anywhere near the size of Avalon, nevertheless it was to be TV2's production centre.

But within a month this and other development plans were thrown awry when Noel Palmer reported to the council on a meeting with Treasury officials. In particular there was a need to conserve overseas expenditure. Not only could no new major projects be financed for some time, but there was also pressure to cancel or withhold orders for approved works and to slow progress on current work by curtailing overtime. The major broadcasting project, stage one of the TV2 coverage, was not in jeopardy but Palmer explained that approval for stage two could be some time away.⁴³ By September the tightness of the proposed financial stringency was clearer. The council development plan to 1980 was for an estimated budget of \$58 million but Treasury wanted this restricted to \$20 million. The council objected to a Treasury assessment that the broadcasting system was faced with bankruptcy and declined to accept a request from the postmaster-general to reduce the limit on capital expenditure approvals by the corporations from \$100,000 to \$50,000.⁴⁴ Clearly there was negotiation to come but the council's and corporations' development plans were never to approximate the levels they wished.

In many ways the tasks of the directors-general were similar. Morris has spoken of both himself and Martin as 'at the coalface day after day'. In bigger organisations, such as the BBC or indeed the NZBC, the director-general is separated from the production chiefs by a band of administrators. In TV1 and TV2 both directors-general were much involved in production as well as administration. The same applied to their deputies, the controllers of programmes. Kevan Moore was the TV2 controller and Bill Munroe took up the position with TV1. Munroe moved with Morris from the ABC and acknowledged the latter as the man from whom he had learnt his craft.⁴⁵ Munroe, however, returned to Australia by the end of the year and was replaced from 1 December 1975 by Des Monaghan.

The two television networks had distinct characters. TV1 was the heir

apparent of the NZBC and took over the great majority of its established programmes, from *Country Calendar* to the big imported dramas. TV2 not only started later than its well-established competitor, but also began with no established status. Early on, in an attempt to establish a broader identity, it renamed itself South Pacific Television (SPTV). Faced with a need to establish an audience, TV2 also introduced telethons to New Zealand television. The first was held on Saturday and Sunday, 5 and 6 July 1975, at the end of the first week of SPTV's transmissions. Television telethons had become established overseas and their New Zealand debut was orchestrated by Max Bostock, from Channel 7 in Perth, who produced SPTV's first telethon. It raised \$500,000 for St John Ambulance, a recipient suggested by board member Dr Ruth Black. This was a highly creditable amount from a channel transmitting fully only to Auckland and on limited power in Christchurch.

At least as important as the money raised for the charity were the benefits to the new television channel. Telethon was a programming innovation of genius, not only giving SPTV much publicity but also increasing public knowledge of the channel and expanding its audience. Telethons became an annual feature for SPTV. There were five in all which gathered ever growing amounts for various charities; the final telethon, on 30 June and 1 July 1979, raised \$2.7 million for the Year of the Child. Over the years many voiced doubts about the manipulative nature of the telethons;⁴⁶ but they were the greatest achievements of SPTV, creating huge public participation in television and unifying the nation in a common cause in a way that had never happened before.

The three corporations continued as distinct entities until 1980, though from February 1977 they operated under the 1976 Broadcasting Act. Although broadcasting received a more intense scrutiny than ever before in these years, most broadcasters regarded this as an exciting and energetic time of achievement. For many others, and especially for National Party politicians, the new system was troublesome, profligate and much in need of a return to a unified management.

LOCAL CONTENT

The greatest of the broadcasting corporations' considerable achievements was the emphasis on New Zealand content. This had been long delayed by the NZBC as it concentrated on extending coverage. But the tide had turned in the last corporation years and the new organisations both reaped the benefit of earlier planning for local programmes as well as adding their own considerable energy to such production.

One example of local programming the television corporations had the good fortune to inherit from the NZBC was *It's in the Bag*, the television equivalent of the earlier radio quiz show. As on radio, the compere was



A wedding on *Close to Home*. NZMA

Selwyn Toogood. He had badgered the NZBC to take on the show and in 1973 had been given a trial run on afternoon television. Toogood, the programme and the frontswoman, Tineke Stephenson, were highly successful and the following year the show was moved to prime time where it scored highly in the ratings from 1974 to 1979. The series ended with a grand finale in the Dunedin Town Hall on 8 May 1979.

The programme that most gave expression to the desire for local content was *Close to Home*, New Zealand's first television soap opera, which started on 8 May 1975, a week after the NZBC ended, and ran for eight years on TV1, screening for 30 minutes every Monday and Tuesday evening. It was another programme begun in the NZBC era to reap benefits for the new corporation. Because it was the first and only continuing New Zealand television drama, it was subject to a disproportionate amount of critical attention. Although regularly mauled by the television critics, the programme held a loyal following and consistently nudged into the top 20 programmes by audience size. Its longevity was important. Over its eight years *Close to Home* gave the audience one continuing view of their society. The actors were widely recognised and



A scene from *Hunter's Gold*. NZMA

became accustomed to being addressed as the characters they played. More importantly, New Zealanders became accustomed to the idea, strange and somehow improper at first, that their own society could be the subject of a television drama series. *Close to Home* gradually became accepted and, because it was on screen so long, led the way in showing that drama about ordinary, familiar life could be a normal and unquestioned part of broadcasting. Within New Zealand broadcasting the mere existence of *Close to Home* was of enormous value. It provided lasting work and a training ground for actors, writers, producers and all involved in television production.

As an entrepreneurial attitude and a new confidence became evident, programmes were made locally but for an international as well as a New Zealand audience. This was particularly so with SPTV and the first programme in this line was the 1976 production, *Hunter's Gold*. A 13-part drama series aimed at both adults and children — a 'kidult' — *Hunter's Gold* was, to that point, the most expensive television drama produced in New Zealand. It was one of the results of Allan Martin successfully enticing John McCrea to return to New Zealand as SPTV's head of drama after



John Clarke as Fred Dagg. NZMA

16 years of work in drama with the BBC. The \$500,000 SPTV invested was a gamble: considerable overseas sales of the programme would be needed to break even. The series was very popular at home and was sold overseas. The unpretentious *Hunter's Gold* showed that it was possible for well-made and well-targeted New Zealand productions to succeed on the international stage. It was followed by other SPTV productions such as *The McKenzie Affair* and *Children of Fire Mountain*. The sale of such programmes marked the start of New Zealand being a recognised exporter, albeit small, of television programmes.

Local television production from the corporations benefited from the 15 years of NZBC experience. This was the time not of adolescence but of young maturity and the products were polished in a manner not possible for the broadcasters of the 1960s. The results were exuberant and often breathtaking in their New Zealandness. Undoubtedly the personality who epitomised the success of the focus on local content was John Clarke. First appearing in the comedy *Buck House*, another programme which showed the NZBC's willingness to experiment and accept local content in its final

years, Clarke developed the persona of Fred Dagg, a black-singleted rural commentator and opponent of pretension. His television programmes, which included occasional appearances on TV1's later news bulletin, *Tonight at Nine*, were enormously popular and his astute irreverence entered the hearts of the nation.

Given their heads by their chairmen, Martin and Morris unleashed a flood of local production which then reduced to a river. The growth of local content lessened as the financial difficulties of the television channels hit home. This was particularly so for the new corporation, SPTV, which was forced to bring in programming changes and cancel much local content. One example was *Speakeasy*, a daily issues show oriented to women and broadcast in the afternoons before the soap operas. It began on 30 June 1975 with the opening of SPTV's transmissions but was halted on 24 December 1975 on the grounds that it was too expensive to run. *Speakeasy* was by no means the only new local programme to be cancelled. For Marcia Russell, who began her SPTV employment fronting the programme, 'just about everything was canned'.⁴⁷

BROADCASTING FINANCES AND ADVERTISING

The decrease in local content from the two television corporations after their initial burst of activity was a consequence of the broadcasting structure's Achilles heel, its financial structure. Even before Labour's broadcasting system began, the NZBC was under financial pressure, not least because of its large staff numbers. In 1974 the *New Zealand Herald* reported the corporation as employing 1100 people in television and 1700 in radio, estimates which McIntosh acknowledged as accurate when he denounced the article because it was based on leaked information.⁴⁸ Such staffing was high by international standards for either publicly or privately owned networks. In the new structure there was not only increased staffing but also greater costs; administration, for instance, took more money with each corporation requiring a head office and staff to run it. Roger Douglas expected, and the three corporations accepted, that they should focus more on local content than the NZBC had done but this was expensive. The television corporations in particular added to their financial burdens by their enthusiastic embracing of competition and their failure to carry out many of the Adam committee's recommendations on shared services.

An equal amount of the financial pressure was coincidental to rather than caused by the actions of the three corporations. The broadcasters had been instructed to introduce a second channel and colour television transmission and the costs associated with these innovations accounted for the lion's share of expenditure in the early 1970s. This spending would have been similar, regardless of the way broadcasting was organised.

The NZBC's own priorities meant it had not been in a good position to embark on such large-scale development. Because it was not allowed to borrow and with the concentration on Avalon, the corporation had not given sufficient attention to the later parts of coverage or to the replacement of equipment. Under the Broadcasting Council both these items chewed up considerable quantities of money and added to the financial difficulties. Since the introduction of Labour's system, the development programme for public broadcasting had differing and conflicting objectives. The legal obligation to provide public broadcasting services for the whole of New Zealand meant continued expenditure on TV1 and RNZ coverage. The establishment of the second channel brought public and TV2 pressure to extend its coverage as quickly as possible. Much RNZ studio equipment was obsolete and required replacement. The Avalon contract needed to be completed but, because it would be used only by TV1, TV2 also needed studios and related facilities to establish a comparable production capability. And all the television facilities needed to be colour capable. As council secretary K. M. Hay noted, these objectives led to conflicting demands and 'not readily defensible' compromises.⁴⁹

The Labour government helped broadcasting finances by accepting the Adam committee's recommendations and transferring some costs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs began annual payments for the overseas short-wave broadcasts and the Department of Education funded RNZ's educational broadcasts. Labour, however, balked at the most expensive of these recommendations and did not transfer the cost of the symphony orchestra away from the responsibility of the Broadcasting Council. Labour's major financial assistance was to give two increases in the licence fee. In 1971 National abolished the separate radio licence fee, incorporated it in the television fee and raised that to \$20. Labour lifted that to \$35 at the start of 1973. In April 1974 Sceats, the director-general, was instructed to prepare a case for an increase in the licence fee and pursue this with the minister.⁵⁰ This was successful and, at the start of 1975, Labour introduced a monochrome fee at \$27.50 while increasing the colour, and effective, fee to \$45.

Roger Douglas had realised that his broadcasting structure would mean higher costs and, to compensate, wanted to increase advertising. In particular he wanted television advertising increased from four to six days a week; he expected this to lift revenue by as much as 50 per cent. This hopeful estimate was not tested for Douglas's suggestion was not accepted by the council. In spite of that decision, during its term the council gradually increased advertising to five days per week.

Douglas's proposal prompted the council to determine how much it was advertising and in February 1974 it decided the permitted level on television was an average of seven minutes an hour, with no more than eight minutes in any one clock hour.⁵¹ Advertising was increased by the

foot-in-the-door method as temporary measures became permanent fixtures. In September, because of the deteriorating financial situation, the council resolved to approve a fifth day of television advertising from 1 November 1974 until the second channel started. Thus Friday advertising was introduced. This became permanent when, in February 1975, the council allowed TV1 and, when it began transmissions, SPTV to advertise on five days a week. Neither channel advertised on Sunday, TV1 not on Mondays and SPTV not on Fridays. After six months, on 1 September 1975, advertising was to revert to four days a week. This reversion never took place. Shortly before the due date Fraser requested that TV2 continue its five day a week advertising for a further six months or at least until the seven transmitters were in full operation. TV2 needed to increase its income and recoup some of the losses arising from its initial transmitter problems. This request led to considerable discussion, with Collins of TV1 contending that if his rival were allowed five days' advertising a week so should TV1. In spite of his initial reservations and his observation that the additional \$300,000 expected revenue for TV2 was insignificant in comparison with its budgeted loss, McIntosh, who was left to determine the matter, decided both channels could continue with five days for a further six months, at which time the matter would be again reconsidered. Later, at the request of both television corporations, another six-month extension was granted.⁵² Four-day advertising did not reappear.

Advertising was also increased in other ways. The NZBC had never allowed advertising during current affairs programmes but this changed under the council. A further increase came with the entry of Sunday advertising in the early hours of 4 May 1975, when TV1 gave a direct satellite broadcast of the English FA Cup final. The council, with Downey dissenting, argued this was really an extension of Saturday advertising because Sunday began at dawn rather than midnight. It permitted advertising up to the end of the direct transmission. The precedent was established and later in the year, again with Downey dissenting, RNZ was allowed the same exemptions during its early Sunday morning commentaries of New Zealand's matches in the Rugby League World Cup. In September 1975 general permission was given for this early Sunday morning advertising in 'association with live coverage of overseas sporting events of national importance'.⁵³

In spite of the advertising and licence fee increases, the Broadcasting Council and corporations could not, and were not expected to, finance their development programmes from revenue. Borrowing was introduced. The eventual debt was a National Development Loan of \$38.9 million,⁵⁴ usually rounded by opponents to \$40 million. New Zealand's publicly owned broadcasters had always been required to survive on revenue and this was the most substantial borrowing ever by the broadcasting

organisation. Borrowing to pay for the broadcasting innovations of the 1970s made cultural and economic sense. In the 1960s the need to build and run the first channel out of revenue had led to the poverty in local programming during that decade. The \$38.9 million debt was a sound investment both to avoid a repetition of that experience and to place the corporations on a surer footing to achieve impressive incomes in the future. But the debt became a topic of divisive political argument. It focused political and public attention on broadcasting and caused many broadcasters, feeling besieged, to passionately express their support for the three corporations.

COUNCIL AND CORPORATIONS

Less prominent publicly but equally contentious was the relationship between the Broadcasting Council and the three corporations. In the act the council was given a combination of authoritative and co-ordinating functions, the nature of which needed to be determined in practice as well as in legislation. The co-ordinating functions included the allocation of the licence fee revenue among the four bodies. For the two television corporations the council was also responsible for achieving complementarity in programming, for purchasing and allocating the right to broadcast sports events, and for purchasing their imported programmes (so as to stop any expensive competition for favoured programmes).

Although the council was the programme purchaser, at least for non-local productions, it had no more authority than the earlier NZBC boards. This was particularly so for programme scheduling, as became clear when Cole Catley's request that television programme schedules be seen by the council before screening was ruled unacceptable. Collins, the TV1 chairman, did not want council members looking at schedules on a regular basis and Hay, the secretary, said the council had no role in quality assessment. According to McIntosh, the council could praise or condemn in retrospect but day-to-day operations were the province of the three corporations.⁵⁵

Rather than attempting to exercise a binding authority, the council relied on co-operation among the corporations, which was considerable; even the two television corporations accepted that they needed to do much together. The chief executives held regular meetings and many previous agreements continued. Everyone accepted a continuation of the Australasian Performing Rights Association (APRA) terms and conditions for a further three years. The corporations agreed on rates of pay for writers and musicians. Censorship and classification of television programmes were also unchanged. A common film archives library was agreed on, based at Avalon, and there was a shared policy on the supply of transcripts of broadcast material. It was accepted, though there was later disagreement about the quality of the work, that audience research

would be common among the three corporations and would be carried out by the council.

The council bought such programmes as overseas sporting events to prevent a competitive bidding and raising of the price. This was required in the legislation but the allocation of purchased programmes to the corporations had to be by agreement. Despite competing desires, there was little rancour; initially, TV1's superior position over TV2 was accepted. So, for overseas television sports items, those the two corporations agreed were of national interest were given to TV1, TV2 then picked an equal number of further items and the remainder were awarded by ballot. But acceptance of TV1's superiority did not last, particularly for Kevan Moore of TV2, and in mid-1977 the agreement on sports items was revised so that TV2 could extend its sports programming. But even here there was an agreement that there would be no 'behind the door' bargaining for coverage rights.⁵⁶

The Labour legislation aimed to give complementary programming — arranging scheduling so that viewers had a significant choice of programmes — but this was hard to achieve. Neither of the television corporations was willing to co-operate in any way that would sometimes allow its rival to screen the acknowledged superior programme; instead they were more inclined to screen like against like. In one of the more infamous examples of the practice, Max Cryer's TV1 interview of Frank Muir, the English raconteur, and the TV2 interview of Muir by Gordon Dryden were screened simultaneously.⁵⁷ Complementarity, which acted against competition, was sacrificed in the pursuit of audience numbers.

Cole Catley, more than other council members, pursued the question of complementarity. In mid-1975, for instance, she questioned whether scheduling *War and Peace* against *Sam* on Sundays and *Colditz* against *Upstairs Downstairs* on Mondays was complementary programming. She saw all these as top-quality programmes; scheduling them against one another was not fulfilling the aims of the restructuring. The council complained particularly about the lack of complementarity for children's programmes. These had always been shown at the same late afternoon time and neither channel was prepared to give way to the other and find a different time. They did eventually attempt a version of complementarity in this area by aiming at different age groups within the children's audience. SPTV's programme, hosted by Andy Shaw, was aimed at teenagers, while Stu Dennison, the TV1 host, geared his programme to younger viewers. But this initiative was unusual and only came about in 1977 after many complaints.

Both television corporations argued that the essence of competition, another restructuring aim, was to schedule good-quality programmes against good-quality programmes, not against weak programmes. New Zealand was merely coming into line with the normal practice in other countries and for the first time in New Zealand viewers were being given a

choice. Whether this was generally between quality programmes was a matter of debate. The council disagreed and drew attention to the reduced number of overseas documentaries being shown and the plethora of soap operas. In November Cole Catley returned to the fray, complaining about the programmes *The Onedin Line* and *The Main Chance* being scheduled against each other. To her it was splitting hairs to say these were different types of programmes and she considered such clashes could be avoided if the channels were more co-operative.

Early on the council endorsed the principle of common junctions (programme beginning and ending times) in television programming schedules but, with the corporations clearly in control of scheduling, was unable to force the issue.⁵⁸ Both Collins and Fraser acknowledged difficulties with complementary programming at peak hours but declined to assist it by bringing in a system of common junctions for programmes, seeing this as impractical and anti-competitive.⁵⁹

Interpreting Labour's intentions for television, the *Dominion* had argued 'TV1 will . . . specialise in lighter programmes while TV2 . . . will provide the more serious less popular counterpointing'.⁶⁰ Nothing could have been further from the truth. Even on non-commercial nights, both channels still concentrated on commercial programming for fear of losing their audience share. In spite of the friendly relations between the principals of the two organisations, there was no willingness to mute their rivalry and schedule their programmes in the interests of greater audience choice.

CENSORSHIP

The lack of co-ordination among the council and corporations and the council's inability to provide a consistent discipline showed up clearly in the matter of censorship. The problem was the long-standing absence of clear responsibility. The NZBC had competed with the Department of Internal Affairs, whose officers included the censor, for the right to censor broadcasting material. The conflict became more prominent with the advent of the council and three corporations, as the broadcasters added to their previous debate with Internal Affairs by competing among themselves for the power to censor.

There were no provisions for censorship in the 1961 act other than that the NZBC had to comply with requirements of good taste and decency. The NZBC and Internal Affairs made an arrangement whereby the corporation submitted its television films to the censor. In practice this was a voluntary and loose system and not all material was submitted. Some imported material was never seen by Internal Affairs and the corporation felt particularly able to censor material it had produced so this was not submitted.

It was agreed early on that the corporation would use the existing film censorship classifications. It interpreted these so that the classification G



Patricia Bartlett, broadcasting morals campaigner, watching television. *DOMINION*

(absolute approval) meant a film could be shown anytime, Y (absolute approval but recommended for 13-year-olds and older) meant a film would not be shown before 8.30pm, and A (absolute approval but recommended for adults) meant a film would not be shown before 9.30pm. But there was no full acceptance of Internal Affairs' classifications or of that department's right to determine NZBC screening policy. There was particular disagreement about restricted films, which could not be seen by people under a certain age. Internal Affairs considered such films should not be screened on television at all, while the NZBC reserved the right to show them after 10.30pm. This disagreement applied most to old cinema films. Two examples given by Internal Affairs were the movies *Three Came Home* and *The Interns*. Both were cut by the censor and then rated R13 and R16 respectively, yet later appeared on television uncut. The NZBC position was that the censorship classifications for many old films were irrelevant because of the change in community standards that had taken place since the original classification. The practice continued beyond the NZBC. One of the more publicly protested examples was TV1's May 1976 screening of the film *Alfie*, censored R18 in 1966. There were many complaints that its 8.35pm Saturday screening was too early.⁶¹

Both the 1961 Broadcasting Act and the 1968 Broadcasting Authority Act required the corporation and the authority to abide by certain stan-

dards but neither act had any requirement for public notification of those standards or of decisions made as to whether programmes did or did not conform to them. Nor were there any appeal procedures: the corporation and authority were sole judges. The Department of Internal Affairs complained about the procedure and about the lack of information given to the public. Neither the classification of films nor the system of time censorship was widely publicised and Internal Affairs wondered whether most people were aware of the system. The bulk of the publicly available information about television censorship came from the censor, usually in the form of a section in the annual report of Internal Affairs. The department considered the NZBC to be in a conflict of interest concerning censorship: it was both a censoring body and a purchaser of material. This conflict was particularly marked when censorship decisions changed once a series had been purchased and screened. Internal Affairs regarded *Dr Kildare* as one such example. The series began with a G certificate but then gradually moved into a more restricted category while remaining in an early time slot. Internal Affairs also referred to *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* and *Lost in Space* as programmes which were held to a G certificate level only by increasingly heavy cutting.

Matters came to a head at the 1969–71 inquiry into the extension of television services when Internal Affairs recommended that new legislation require all television material other than news film and live broadcasts to be censored by an independent censoring authority.⁶² The NZBC then broke off its informal agreement with the department and from 1 April 1969 conducted its own censorship. It continued to use the G, Y and A classifications but decided the time requirements were too harsh and brought them forward 30 minutes. The inquiry accepted the NZBC position over that of Internal Affairs, agreeing with the NZBC system of classification and, most importantly, recommending that the warrant holder, not an independent authority, do the censoring. It did, however, suggest that greater publicity be given to the system of classifications. Film classifications should be stated in advertisements, in the *Listener* for example, and before the actual screening. Also the classification system itself should be regularly publicised. So the NZBC censored television films until 31 March 1975. Neither the Broadcasting Authority Act nor the programme rules of the authority referred specifically to censorship and the authority made no move to take over this function.

The disputes over censoring authority were increased with the formation of Labour's broadcasting system. When the council was established it took over censoring on the incorrect understanding that the corporations would accept its rulings. It discarded the film censor's classifications in April 1975 when it accepted a TV1 proposal and replaced these on a 12-month trial by four categories: U or universal, meaning the programme could be broadcast at any time; L or limited, meaning recommended for

screening after 7.30pm; A or adult, meaning recommended for adults and for screening after 8.30pm; and S or special, which entailed a particular recommendation in each case such as, for example, screening after 10.30pm.⁶³ These changes meant, essentially, the addition of a fourth category and an easing of the time restrictions by another half-hour.

There were soon difficulties about censoring. The television corporations were reluctant to accept the council's authority, arguing that though the act made the council responsible for prescribing standards, censoring programmes went beyond its powers. This was best left to the corporations. The council view, as expressed by Hay, was that because censorship needed to be consistent and removed from commercial and scheduling pressures, it should be done by the council. In a compromise, a six-month trial was adopted in August 1975: the council would preview and censor all overseas programmes and New Zealand-commissioned programmes and direct what cuts were to be made. The corporations were to censor all other New Zealand-produced programmes, which effectively meant those they had produced themselves. In both cases the U, L, A and S classifications would be used. Council members felt they could do no less. If the council was not the final arbiter for censorship its responsibility for setting standards would be eroded. By classifying overseas programmes, the majority of the material, it was establishing a reference for the corporations to use in judging local programmes.⁶⁴

There were problems when the corporations did not adhere to the council rulings. In late 1975 and early 1976 Patricia Bartlett, national secretary of the Society for the Promotion of Community Standards and a strong critic of broadcasting standards of morality, contended in letters to the *Listener* that the council's censorship was 'completely powerless and ineffective'. She was referring to a programme called *The Japanese Experience*, where TV1 had not accepted all the council's proposed cuts and had broadcast its own preferred version. As Collins noted, in this particular instance Patricia Bartlett had put her finger on a very sensitive area, which made any effective reply very difficult. The six-month trial was made permanent in April 1976 but it did not mean that a co-ordinated procedure was in place.⁶⁵

The corporations and council also disagreed about the need to stick to restrictions imposed by Internal Affairs. The secretary of the department complained after excerpts from restricted films were shown on TV2's *The Grunt Machine*. Although the Cinematograph Films Act did not apply to television, McIntosh considered the corporations should act within the spirit of the law. The council accepted the argument the corporations inherited from the NZBC, namely that excerpts from older and previously censored films could be broadcast because community attitudes had changed, but also argued that excerpts from restricted films on first release should not be shown on television. The two television chairmen, Collins

and Fraser, however, saw no problem in showing inoffensive excerpts from any restricted films. The secretary of Internal Affairs disagreed: screening innocuous snippets from restricted or banned films invited unfavourable public judgement of his department's censorship practice.⁶⁶

The three corporations also disagreed among themselves over censorship standards, particularly concerning popular music. RNZ had grown used to the private stations playing records it deemed unacceptable but objected strongly to this happening within the three-corporation structure. The television corporations not only played records banned by RNZ, but also drew attention to this fact while playing them.⁶⁷

The inconsistent approaches to censorship became topics of public and political discussion. The National Opposition saw censorship difficulties as indicative, yet again, of problems with Labour's creation and as a further justification for a reordering of broadcasting.

NEWS

It was in the area of news that the council's restricted authority was most publicly shown. The competition among the three corporations, but especially between the two television corporations, was fiercest over news. The battle entered the political arena and became part of the 1975 election agenda, culminating in the ending of the Labour government's broadcasting structure.

Initially there was agreement and co-operation when the costs of news services were shared, again with little debate. The Reuters-AAP service cost \$98,000 per year from 1975 with RNZ paying 70 per cent and TV1 30 per cent. With the start of a new television corporation, RNZ wanted a 50/50 split between itself and the two corporations combined, while they wished RNZ to continue to pay 70 per cent. The agreement reached was for RNZ to pay 60 per cent and the two television corporations the other 40 per cent. Similarly, the costs of RNZ's general news service was shared on a proportionate basis.⁶⁸

The Reuters-AAP service supplied a print service of overseas news. There was agreement and co-operation about filmed overseas news but in this area came the first significant change from the Adam committee's recommendation. The NZBC received television overseas film from the Visnews service, of which the NZBC was an affiliated member, and the CBS Viacom service. Visnews, working in association with NBC of America, provided a direct daily airfreight from London covering Europe, San Francisco covering the Americas, Tokyo covering Asia, and Sydney covering Australia. CBS provided daily airfreights from Los Angeles and New York and irregular services from London and Hong Kong. Although its service was generally preferred for its overall standards, CBS had decided to withdraw its Australasian service from June 1974, leaving only

Visnews. The Adam committee recommended the newly available UPITN service, suggesting that the two television channels could draw on different overseas news sources, thus offering separate and distinct news material. But when the NZBC arranged for a trial of UPITN material, it declared it of 'a generally poor standard and . . . totally unacceptable'.⁶⁹ The same verdict was delivered in Australia, which made the New Zealand decision irrelevant since a service to New Zealand alone would have been uneconomic. Instead the television corporations chose to co-operate to receive their filmed overseas news from a further alternative, satellite technology, which was not discussed in the Adam report.

SATELLITE COMMUNICATION

In 1945 Arthur C. Clarke noted that three correctly placed satellites in geosynchronous orbits could be used to provide a planet-wide communication. The first communication satellites could not be lifted far enough to achieve such an orbit and could only be used intermittently while they were above the horizon. The launching of INTELSAT 1 in 1965 began the achievement of Clarke's vision, which was realised in 1969 with the launching of the third INTELSAT. Since then, there have been enormous advances in satellite and other communication technology.

New Zealand's entry into satellite communication began in 1971 with the opening by the P&T Department of its Warkworth satellite receiving station. Although the new facility was designed primarily for telephone use, its worth for broadcasting was demonstrated within a month of opening with live telecasts of the astronauts of Apollo 15 both on the moon and returning to Earth. More than a third of New Zealanders rose in the early hours to watch the 'moonwalk' and, on a Sunday morning, the more conveniently timed 'splash-down' was watched by three-quarters of the population.⁷⁰ At \$1,600 for the first 10 minutes and \$3,000 for a programme beamed from Europe, the cost for using the station meant that the NZBC initially regarded the facility itself with some scepticism.⁷¹ But the public enthusiasm for the Apollo transmissions and the lead given by the BBC, which immediately used the Warkworth station to relay to Britain the two remaining tests between the All Blacks and the 1971 touring Lions rugby team, soon convinced broadcasters that 'programming considerations should always come first'.⁷² Still it was the following year before the NZBC transmitted its first live programme via satellite, to Jordan on 30 May 1972 to mark the inauguration of that country's satellite station.⁷³ Satellite-provided material soon appeared on news programmes and gradually increased in frequency: in its 1974 report the NZBC noted that at one stage it had used satellite material on its news programme for seven consecutive days. The speed of transmission justified sending NZBC journalists overseas to report on events of special significance to New Zealand. The first such

exercise, and the first non-sports reporter to leave New Zealand on assignment, came in 1973 to cover the New Zealand submission to the World Court at The Hague against France's nuclear tests in the Pacific. The new technology gradually moved from being an expensive luxury to become a normal part of everyday broadcasting equipment, but it must not be forgotten that satellite communication gave the largest rebuff to New Zealand's geographical isolation since the development of the telegraph network a century earlier.⁷⁴

At first, satellite transmission was chiefly used in rugby telecasting. Late in 1972 the NZBC followed the example set by the BBC the year before and provided live telecasts in New Zealand of the test matches played in Britain by the All Blacks. The first was the match played against Wales at Cardiff Arms Park in December. A New Zealand television audience of 200,000 got up in the middle of the night to watch the All Blacks' 19-16 victory. This was the first use of satellite transmission to broadcast a rugby commentary in New Zealand and only the second test match to be televised live. The first was the test match played against Australia on 16 September 1972 at Eden Park and won by New Zealand 38-3. The NZBC's acceptance of satellite technology was also the New Zealand Rugby Football Union's acceptance of live telecasting. Previously the NZRFU had refused to allow live broadcasts of tests for fear of reduced attendance at the match and at other games played at the same time. The public had always wanted live telecasts and with the arrival of satellite transmission the NZRFU realised that it would no longer be able to stop live rugby transmission, at least for matches played outside New Zealand. But allowing live telecasting of overseas matches while prohibiting it for those played at home was too fine a distinction for viewers to accept and on 26 August 1972 the NZRFU bowed to the inevitable and permitted the first live telecast of a major rugby match in New Zealand: Australia played Hawke's Bay, who won 15-14. The NZRFU's fears were realised when only 10,000 spectators attended the game. The message from the televised Eden Park test the following month, however, was less clear. Rugby officials were content that 43,000 spectators watched the game at the venue; although that was 12,000 fewer than had gone to the previous test at Eden Park, the difference could be put down to the calibre of the opposition.⁷⁵ The earlier test had been against the Lions, with the All Blacks trying to level the series, whereas the televised test was against what had become known as the 'Woeful Wallabies' and was a much less attractive game. But the test telecasting was regarded as lowering attendance at other matches played that afternoon: Canterbury's Ranfurly Shield match, played at Lancaster Park against the West Coast, was watched by a mere 1750 spectators.⁷⁶ But there was no turning back. Broadcasters and rugby officials alike had accepted the need for live telecasts of test matches, whether played in New Zealand or abroad.

The NZBC began negotiations with the ABC and Australian commercial networks for a daily shared satellite news service from London. The cost was high. In 1974 the Visnews service cost \$75,000 per year and produced 4000 feet of film a week, about 100 minutes. Adding the cost of an additional print, for the second channel, would bring the cost to \$117,000. What the NZBC, and then the three corporations, wanted was a more expensive alternative, a daily satellite service. This was estimated at slightly more than double this cost. The extra was not just for the satellite service itself, however, but also to provide for New Zealand representation in Sydney and London. This was considered necessary in London to protect New Zealand's interests in the initial selection of material and to contribute items of special interest, and in Sydney, the other end of the Indian Ocean satellite link, to assemble the best of the material and to evaluate Australian film for inclusion in the transmission to New Zealand. The argument was that the higher cost of a satellite service would justify taking the long-desired additional step of having New Zealand input into the initial selection of overseas news. The satellite service was, of course, considerably faster than airfreight and, even apart from financial considerations, it was not possible to give it only to one channel and expect the other to remain with a slower airfreight service. The decision meant that, for overseas news, the Adam committee plan for competitive news services was traded for a faster, more expensive, shared satellite service. This began in April 1975 with a daily 10-minute news feed augmented with additional material as and when required. In spite of the Warkworth station, for some time it was a satellite service only to Sydney. To save an additional satellite transmission, the material was videotaped and flown across the Tasman, arriving in New Zealand in time for that evening's news programmes.

But the corporations did not gain New Zealand representation in London and Sydney and news selection remained in the hands of others. In 1976 the chairman asked if there was any New Zealand influence over the choice of satellite news. Peter Fabian, who followed Ben Coury as head of news, told him that, with most of the satellite costs being met by Australia, New Zealand had little or no influence and the situation would be improved only when New Zealand had representation in London.⁷⁷

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

With regard to New Zealand news the changes made by the corporations diverged even more from the intentions of Douglas and the Adam committee. In 1974, when the changes were considered in detail, the NZBC relied for New Zealand news on its General News Service (GNS), staffed by journalists stationed in the various corporation radio stations. Although the television news operation gathered news in its own right, it maintained staff only in the four television centres. It sent reporters and camera crews

throughout the country as the occasion warranted but the backbone of the service was the GNS, with its news from radio staff reporting for both media. In the combined radio and television news services, 140 news personnel from Whangarei to Invercargill pooled their information so that news at local, regional and national levels was available to all NZBC outlets.

For national news, the Adam committee proposals were never acted on. Adam envisaged the council, through a general manager of news, acting as a central agency based at Avalon, collecting news from radio journalists into a GNS as before and making it available to the news editors of the three corporations. The continuation of the GNS's central role rested uncomfortably with the new tripartite structure. Labour's break-up of the old order ignored the unusual but effective co-operative relationship between the two media in news and current affairs and as the three corporations developed, the television corporations relied less and less on RNZ's journalists. For television news, Adam envisaged a television equivalent of the GNS. The general manager would deploy reporters and camera teams to get visual coverage and then make this material available to the two television corporations' news editors. There were considerable difficulties with the proposals and they did not eventuate. Adam's view of the general manager as being responsible for news collection but not for its selection was an artificial and unworkable distinction which did not take account of the fact that the initial deployment of reporters and camera crews and the discussion of the type of coverage they should aim for were themselves part of a news editor's responsibility. These were not tasks for the overseeing council.

As the report became implemented, the emphasis shifted towards the Adam committee's desire for the corporations to be independent. RNZ's GNS continued and remained available to all, though used decreasingly by the two television corporations which also gathered news in their own right. This led to large cost increases. At the break-up, the NZBC's equipment needed considerable updating and now that equipment had to be duplicated for a second television corporation. Then there was the addition of sufficient journalists to staff a separate news organisation.

There were further difficulties with the strong regional presences that were envisaged for the two television corporations. Neither Labour nor the Adam committee detailed what this meant with regard to regional news. With both channels transmitting nationwide and with each channel linked to two cities, it implied that, say, TV2, linked with Auckland and Christchurch, would present a local news programme for TV2 viewers throughout the country. In effect, that meant Auckland would present a local news bulletin for the entire North Island plus Marlborough, Nelson and the West Coast, while the Christchurch local programme would be seen on TV2 in the rest of the South Island. Such a system would mean either a programme so broad that it would no longer be local or the forcing of Auckland or Christchurch local programmes on viewers from other

centres. Similar problems would occur on TV1. An alternative, which did not seriously compromise the wish for regionalism, was to return to a version of the NZBC's pre-networking regionalism, with both television corporations preparing and presenting local news programmes from all four main centres. This ran counter to the desire for co-operation and also required a much bigger staff and increased costs. There was no acceptable solution to the conundrum and the result was neglect of a regional focus in order to concentrate on a national emphasis.

Although the corporations co-operated to receive overseas news, within New Zealand the stress was on competition, especially between the two television channels. An early aspect of the battle was the timing for the nightly news programmes. The NZBC had its main programme at 7pm. TV1, which began transmissions on 1 April 1975, three months before SPTV, opened with its news programme at 6.30pm. SPTV opened with a 7pm news broadcast, but in November 1975, when it began Wellington transmissions, it moved to a daily news bulletin at 6pm. As Ben Coury has noted, the changes were made for commercial reasons rather than for audience satisfaction.⁷⁸ Not only did each channel wish to have the news first, but success meant that channel was the more likely to retain the audience for its following programmes. Both channels also had news programmes later in the evening. SPTV's *News at Ten* was a distinct programme, but it effectively abandoned its news programmes during weekends.

The emphasis on news led to changes in presentation styles with an accent on the personalities of the newsreaders and reporters. During the NZBC years Stringer had always discouraged the promotion of on-screen personnel, believing it bad for morale in what was a group production. Now the opposite occurred. On TV1 the reporters were required to appear on screen and present their stories as if in conversation with the newsreaders and audience. On TV2 Bruce Crossan, the head of news, moved to a dual presentation with readers Tom Bradley in Auckland and Philip Sherry in Wellington, allowing them 'to show a more human approach' and encouraging 'interplay between their personalities'.⁷⁹ Previously a newsreader on TV1, Sherry was rejected at the changeover in favour of a fresh face, only to be chosen by SPTV as a symbol of authority and continuity. In an arrangement indicative of the new environment, Sherry worked on contract to SPTV but was employed by RNZ where he continued radio announcing.

As part of the changes in news presentation Jennie Goodwin became the newsreader for SPTV's *News at Ten*, produced by David Beatson. She also featured regularly on that channel's 6pm news. Goodwin was not only New Zealand's but also the Commonwealth's first prime-time female newsreader; the BBC appointed its first woman newsreader some months later.

The television chairmen argued that, as each corporation developed, the shared use of RNZ journalists became less and less practicable, that the two channels had inherited a style of news coverage which demanded cov-



Jennie Goodwin, newsreader. NZMA

erage of provincial areas and that there was competition for increased news coverage generally and more current affairs programming.

All this led to an unexpected increase in news personnel. The council was soon expressing its concern at newspaper reports that 70 to 80 additional journalists were required and both television directors-general said they had no intention of taking on anything like this number. In August 1975, however, Cole Catley was questioning what she called an 'unduly large increase' in the number of journalists employed in broadcasting. At the time there were 108 in RNZ alone, a figure Downey acknowledged as high. In spite of this, Cole Catley considered that the provincial areas were not being well covered by television and she asked about the deployment of journalists and whether the corporations were arranging to share services. McIntosh also noted a lack of sharing of services and pointed out that each of the three corporations had been represented at yachting's Admiral's Cup, that both television corporations had hired helicopters to cover an accident at Mount Cook and that two camera crews had filmed a speech given by Roger Douglas. Such examples went to the heart of the matter. Neither television corporation was prepared to neglect such news items and leave the field to its competitor. By October 1975 broadcasting was employing another 144 journalists over the total at the ending of the NZBC; McIntosh indicated this meant an increase in salaries alone of over \$1 million a year. At this stage the council accepted that the Adam committee's proposals were unworkable: competition had won out over co-

operation. The only method of cost control was by each corporation through its own management and budgetary procedures.⁸⁰ But the corporations faced competitive pressure that forced them to spend more on their news broadcasts.

POLITICAL SCRUTINY

The third Labour government had only the one term in office before being defeated at the 1975 election. Labour's broadcasting structure began in mid-1975 but transmitted only in Auckland and Canterbury. The Te Aroha transmitter came into use for SPTV in August 1975 but Kaukau in Wellington became operational on the eve of the election and the rest of the system only after National's victory. So Labour's creation had the misfortune to exist either during an election campaign in which it was one of the issues or under an antagonistic National government that made clear its intention to end Labour's structure. Although broadcasting policy was not the major issue for the election, it was a matter of contention between National and Labour and National, particularly its leader Robert Muldoon, saw the new structure as an excellent opportunity to berate its political opponent.

The National Opposition objected strongly to the lessening of parliamentary accountability over broadcasting. The council and corporations had to present annual reports and statements of accounts to Parliament, as with the NZBC, but there was no requirement, as in the 1961 act, to comply with the government's general policy on broadcasting, nor could the minister issue directions to the council or the corporations. Douglas regarded himself and his party as acting beyond Labour's immediate interests and making a genuine attempt to free broadcasting from political control. Labour abolished the post of minister of broadcasting, leaving it to the postmaster-general to deal with those broadcasting concerns that could be raised in Parliament. Douglas considered these should be largely confined to questions on engineering and financial matters.

The council was very much in favour of such a restriction. Ford, who raised the matter there, argued that if the principle of independence from political interference was honoured, the council and corporations should not have to supply answers to questions other than those relating to policy. As far as the council was concerned, parliamentary accountability was restricted to matters agreed to by it and Bill Rowling, the Labour prime minister after Norman Kirk's death: parliamentary questions would be answered 'on matters of broad financial and technical interest and general aspects of the activities of the Broadcasting Council and the three corporations'. For the council this meant that, in practice, questions on day-to-day administration, on financial information which would be competitively disadvantageous and on programmes would not be answered.⁸¹

But since Rowling had announced this decision in the House in April 1975, the Opposition had fought it strongly and consistently to the point of H. J. (Bert) Walker, the National MP for Papanui, introducing daily notices of motion on the topic. The result was that the Speaker decided on a procedure whereby questions could be asked of the postmaster-general who would convey them to the council and corporations for answers which were then relayed to the House.⁸² A widening of questions was accepted and National effectively won a return to the long-standing system whereby questions on all aspects of broadcasting were permissible. In this considerably increased parliamentary scrutiny the main figure was the leader of the Opposition, Robert Muldoon. As Templeton has noted, Labour's broadcasting policy 'presented a very broad backside to beat for people as acute as Muldoon'.⁸³ That policy became an issue in the 1975 election.

ROBERT MULDOON

Muldoon considered himself 'one of the fortunate politicians who grew up with political television'. Certainly he was among the first of New Zealand politicians to accept that television had changed political life and that, with the development of current affairs broadcasting, an aspiring senior politician needed to develop broadcasting competence. He examined his own performances carefully in search of a style with which he felt satisfied and comfortable. This was not always in line with broadcasters' own appraisals, with the best example being Muldoon's early habit of speaking directly to the camera rather than to the interviewer. His own mail was at odds with the NZBC criticism of this 'faulty technique' and was a first instance of a New Zealand politician developing his own persona rather than accepting the guidance of television professionals.⁸⁴ Muldoon did this with considerable success. During the time of the third Labour government Norman Kirk was the only government politician who approached Muldoon's media presence and, after Kirk's death, Muldoon reigned supreme until the rise of David Lange. A superb political campaigner, Muldoon made his television appearances the pivot of his attempts to take his message to the people. National's success in the 1975 election is largely attributable to his leadership and domination of the campaign.

When he first entered Parliament Muldoon was encouraged by Holyoake, his party leader, to appear on television. Both as a developing politician and as a senior member and then leader of the Opposition, Muldoon was generally available for interviews and comments. The publicity, of course, was to his advantage but, nevertheless, he regularly showed considerable broadcasting courage both in his readiness to appear and in his performances on air. One of the more discussed examples of this was, ironically, on a programme that was never broadcast. It was *The Brian Edwards Show*, made towards the end of the NZBC era as a pilot episode

for a possible series. Muldoon agreed to appear and be interviewed by Edwards and by Tim Shadbolt, Alister Taylor and Chris Wheeler, whom Muldoon termed 'three radical activists'. Opinions of the ensuing programme varied considerably. David Beatson described it as 'the finest television programme you never saw'.⁸⁵ Alexander MacLeod, not a man afraid to bite the corporation that fed him, regarded the pilot as in 'abysmal taste' and indicating 'a serious lapse in planning and judgement at the production level'.⁸⁶ Finally, in what became a *cause célèbre*, the NZBC hierarchy decided against screening the show and no other episodes were ever made. That decision, however, does not detract from Muldoon's readiness to appear and 'risk my own reputation in the process'.⁸⁷ In a manner typical of his abrasive approach to broadcasting concerns, Muldoon queried whether the corporations's rejection of *The Brian Edwards Show* made it unsuitable to control the second channel. McKinnon acknowledged he was disturbed that a minister of the Crown should so link the two topics 'at the very time when this matter [the second channel] was to come before government for decision'.⁸⁸

Muldoon dominated his caucus, and after his election as prime minister, his Cabinet, in a way few of his National Party predecessors had approached. Therefore his opinion of the system instituted by his political opponents was the determining factor in its future. Kevan Moore knew Muldoon sufficiently well to ask his opinion of the broadcasting system. Muldoon conceded it was good to have a choice and also spoke favourably of the style and programmes of South Pacific Television, for which Moore was controller of programmes. But he made it clear that he did not like the two-channel arrangement. His reason harked back to the New Zealand tradition where the purpose of broadcasting was to provide a convenient means for the government to communicate with the people. Muldoon felt the new system made that difficult. 'When I talk on television I want to talk to the whole country. I don't want to talk to two sets of reporters. I only want to talk to one.'⁸⁹ In the lead-up to the 1975 election Muldoon was successful in attacking the broadcasting news services. In a country unused to it, broadcasting competition, particularly between the television channels with their two sets of reporters and camera crews attending each story, was easily portrayed not as a phenomenon that most television countries regarded as normal but as a Labour-led wasteful use of scarce resources.

1975 ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The 1975 election was not a focus for coverage competition between the two television channels. On election night SPTV did cross to David Beatson in the studio throughout the night for live results. It also had pre-election programmes, most notably one in which Rowling and Muldoon appeared together and faced questions from Beatson, Gordon Dryden and



Cartoon Cossacks in a National Party election advertisement in 1975. NZMA

Bruce Slane. But most of the election coverage was on TV1 and RNZ. As with TV2's questioning of Rowling and Muldoon, their pre-election programmes continued and extended the 'without fear or favour' style of presentation that had replaced the obsequiousness of the 1960s, and the country's politicians showed themselves quite capable of handling a more robust inquisitorial presentation style. On election night TV1 was given over to election coverage as were the RNZ stations, both national and commercial.

Broadcasting was, however, a feature of the 1975 election campaign in terms of how the political parties used it. The free election time, particularly on television and by the National Party, saw the most concerted adaptation of commercial advertising methods to a political campaign New Zealand had experienced. The campaign was punctuated by short advertisements illustrating National's views of its strengths and Labour's weaknesses. The most prominent and contentious depicted cartoon Cossacks dancing across the screen to indicate the supposed Russian-style communism of the Labour government. The advertisements aroused considerable protest, not least from the broadcasting authorities themselves, but were more notable for their success with the electorate, where they played their part in National's victory.

Such advertising had first appeared, though with less intensity, in the 1972 campaign and the council attempted to prevent it in 1975. Sceats told the council that the arrival of such advertising resulted from allowing

the political parties to use their free broadcasting allocation in blocks of no less than one minute, a reduction from the previous two and a half minutes. The council determined that, in the 1975 election, the free time broadcasting would be used in no less than three-minute blocks, long enough for 'genuine electioneering material and policy presentation'.⁹⁰

The council also decided that current affairs programmes could continue until three days before the election. The allocation of time among the parties was a broadcasting decision and would be made for each party in terms of the its number of candidates and level of electoral support. Both Labour and National had a total of 205 minutes on radio and 155 minutes on television. Social Credit and then Values had correspondingly less and for the first time the Socialist Unity party was given television time, albeit only six minutes.⁹¹ There would be a common approach for the three corporations and a complementarity rule would be observed: the two channels should not schedule political broadcasts against each other. In practice, most of the television time was scheduled on TV1. It had the greater coverage and, because of that, carried all the leaders' opening and closing addresses.⁹²

The council soon learnt that its power to control election coverage was limited,⁹³ particularly with the private radio stations whose broadcasters did not share established opinion regarding proper conduct at election time and had no intention of following it. The private stations had become increasingly important as they gained a greater share of the audience. By late 1973, when Labour's Broadcasting Act was passed, the seven private radio stations attracted 24 per cent of the possible audience aged 10 and over, as against the 22 NZBC commercial stations which had 54 per cent. This audience share continued to increase and by April 1977 the private stations held 34 per cent of the national audience.⁹⁴ The council regarded much of the broadcasting on the private stations as improper. The secretary was instructed to write to Radio Windy complaining about one of its talkback hosts, Bob Jones, who usually referred to prime minister Bill Rowling as 'the mouse'. At a time when the council was instructing the corporations' staff to be more formal in addressing parliamentarians and stop using their first names, Radio Windy's practice was seen as 'undesirable' and as 'undermining and ridiculing Parliament and its public figures'.⁹⁵ Jones, a politically active, prominent businessman rather than a salaried announcer, had waged a continuing battle against the Labour government. Supported by Radio Windy, he had no intention of relenting just as the election campaign began. The complaint brought no change in Jones's language and the council was soon faced with what it saw as more serious breaches of proper broadcasting behaviour. The private stations did not accept that regular broadcasters who became candidates should forgo their sessions during the campaign and be treated like other candidates. Nor did they see any difficulty with regular talkback hosts cam-

paigining for or against any party or candidate. This became apparent during the Wellington local body elections. Brian Edwards, at the time a talk-back host on Radio Windy, expressed strong opinions on the eve of the election against the then sitting mayor, Frank Kitts, who lost his position. As the *Listener* noted, 'The calls snowballed in agreement.'⁹⁶

The council also had only limited authority over the broadcasts from the three corporations. Each acted independently and there was no application of the council's decision that they should have a common approach.⁹⁷ The council considered the situation was compounded by the commercial tack taken by the parties' advertising agencies. It also felt that, because programme time had been made available without charge, the parties considered they were free to use it as they saw fit without reference to the council or corporations and without giving any previewing opportunities. The results were something the council did not want to see in future election campaigns and it decided to take what steps it could to prevent the repetition of 'advertising gimmicks'.⁹⁸

After the election the corporations' chief executives proposed a meeting with officials of the political parties to discuss why the council's policy was not carried out. This was considered more likely to be accepted than a unilateral imposition of rules by the council.⁹⁹ So McIntosh wrote to all political parties in 1976 reminding them that, in 1974, the council had established guidelines based on two aims: that paid political advertising be 'carefully structured to avoid the dangers inherent in the American system' and that free television and radio time be used primarily for the exposition of party policies and for debate and discussion of the issues. He noted that the guidelines were only partly observed and that, in the political broadcasts, 'extensive use was made of commercial techniques'. He concluded by saying the 'council sees no reason why it should change its firm belief that techniques suited to the sale of goods and services are inappropriate for communicating political ideas and policies'.

In reply the Labour Party agreed it was 'necessary to avoid the tasteless political advertising which marked the 1975 election campaign' and accepted in principle the proposal to increase the minimum time to three minutes.¹⁰⁰ The National Party, however, was unrepentant. 'We would not like to return to the long, dull, boring studio talking heads that fortunately were little used in 1975 but which become almost inevitable under your new proposal.'¹⁰¹

6

REUNIFICATION AND THE BCNZ

1976 BROADCASTING ACT

The new prime minister, Robert Muldoon, not only wanted a new Broadcasting Act but, realising the legislation would take a year to develop and pass, wanted the changes made early in his first term and out of the way before the next election cycle began. The task was done: the 1976 Broadcasting Act came into effect on 1 February 1977.

Well before that, the election of the new government brought immediate changes to broadcasting. The Broadcasting Council resolved that, though it had a responsibility to maintain the status quo, it would make no decisions counter to the new government's policy. This had particular application to the news area, where the government had already made statements signalling its intentions. There would be no further appointments in news.¹

Muldoon appointed Hugh Templeton minister of broadcasting and postmaster-general. As with Kirk and Roger Douglas, broadcasting was given to a new and junior minister who had little previous involvement in the portfolio. Templeton, a strong supporter of BBC style broadcasting, saw himself as shaped by his experience of it. But, returning to New Zealand in the 1950s 'full of admiration for the BBC third programme', he soon regarded the YC network as its superior. Like most in the 1950s Templeton had thought little of the impact of television. He missed its first four years in the 1960s while living in Samoa and, back in New Zealand, he was impressed with what had been achieved with the resources available.

Templeton, who had lost his seat in the 1972 election, spent the years of the third Labour government as executive assistant to J. R. (John) Marshall and secretary of caucus with special responsibility for policy development. National's broadcasting policy was to recombine the three corporations. Templeton did not develop that policy but he saw the 'anger and fury' of the National Party MPs at the 1973 Act. On his appointment, Templeton, like Douglas, quickly changed the broadcasting administration. Apart from the call for haste from his prime minister, Templeton was also urged on by McIntosh who reported the broadcasting structure as 'bank-

rupt' and the three corporations as 'uncontrollable and unmanageable'. Templeton was offered assistance by all three corporation chairmen and in particular used the services of Ian McLean, secretary of the Broadcasting Council. But generally, again like Douglas, he stayed away from the broadcasting employees, who could be regarded as unsupportive of his plans, and relied on the Cabinet Communications Committee, which he chaired. Templeton made use of his own network and his own ideas. Among others, he received advice from Geoffrey Cox in London and *Listener* editor Ian Cross. As well as being influential in formulating the principles of the act, Cross suggested the addition whereby the general broadcasting requirements included the need 'to ensure that programmes reflect and develop New Zealand's identity and culture'.² This was an attempt to counter the low level of local content, especially in television. It was the first appearance in legislation of what would become an increasingly important aspect in New Zealand's understanding of the purpose of public broadcasting.

Templeton abandoned National's 1972 policy which would have retained one channel in public control while giving the other to private enterprise. Instead he wished to continue broadcasting as predominantly publicly owned. The main features of National's Broadcasting Act were recombination and a re-emphasis of public accountability. Templeton was impressed with some aspects of Labour's changes. He wanted to maintain the energy and spirit of broadcasters working within the separate corporations and wished to keep the two television corporations based in separate cities. He did not choose to establish a single organisation with a single director-general. But Templeton was dismayed by what he saw as 'a wasteful lack of co-ordination' and wanted a single board of control, rather than the existing four, to ensure that all the divisions of broadcasting shared a common purpose.³ The three independent divisions would be retained under separate directors-general, each with a high degree of autonomy on a day-to-day basis. The four previous entities, the council and the three corporations, were combined into the Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand (BCNZ), which was controlled by a government-appointed board of seven to nine members, including a chairman and deputy chairman. A requirement for the corporation 'to have regard to' the government's broadcasting policy was restored, as was that of complying with any ministerial directions. The minister could not give directions regarding programmes or complaints. There were stronger ministerial powers in the early versions of the bill but these were removed after members of the select committee objected.⁴ The corporation was entitled to establish services and divisions as it saw fit but was required to maintain Radio New Zealand, Television One and Television Two. As with the previous act, Television One was to operate principally from Wellington and Dunedin and Television Two from Auckland and Christchurch. The board was required to appoint three standing committees

from its members with separate responsibilities for RNZ and the two television services. Despite its theme of reunification, Templeton's act did not go as far as requiring radio and the two television channels to be under the same administration.

The other main creation of the act was the Broadcasting Tribunal, a three-member judicial body of which the chairman had to be a barrister or solicitor. The tribunal was a separate body independent of the corporation, with its administration handled within the Department of Justice. Its principal function was to hear applications, and decide whether to grant warrants, which were for five-year terms, for both corporation and private stations. All existing stations were to be granted warrants and the tribunal's power to allow new stations applied only to radio. Further television warrants required the minister's permission. The tribunal was to ensure compliance with warrant terms and conditions, though it could revoke a warrant for a corporation station only with the minister's approval.

Criteria for programme standards were stated in the act and a committee was to be established to make rules for programmes and advertising. This committee consisted of corporation members when concerned with television but for radio matters had to include at least one member of the Independent Broadcasters' Association (IBA). When agreement could not be reached regarding radio matters, a further committee, chaired by the tribunal chairman, with equal representation from the corporation and the IBA, would take over.

National's approach to broadcasting included a consideration of broadcasting censorship and partially redressed some of the considerable difficulties involved. Although it felt the BCNZ should adhere to or be more strict than the film censor's rulings, the Cabinet Committee on Broadcasting accepted the broadcasters' argument that it was impractical, because of logistical problems in getting programmes censored in time to meet advertised schedules, to have all censoring done by the film censor. It directed its officials to obtain the names and titles of the council's and corporations' censors, the object being to find if there was a distinct censoring section. If so, the Cabinet committee felt the same people should continue to do the censoring but the entire section should be removed from the broadcasting milieu.⁵ This was not done and the 1976 act continued with censoring provisions similar to those of the 1961 legislation. The eventual amalgamation of the three corporations into the BCNZ removed the conflicts within broadcasting that had bedevilled the council but the unclear respective authority of the BCNZ and the Department of Internal Affairs remained.

Government financial control over the BCNZ followed the 1961 model. The corporation could advise the minister of the rate at which it felt the licence fee should be set but, as ever, the actual setting was a ministerial decision. The corporation could borrow money only with the con-

sent of the minister of finance. It had to give the minister of broadcasting an annual proposed programme of capital works and any expenditure above \$200,000 for any particular purpose required ministerial approval.

Broadcasting employees were returned to the full authority of the SSC, with a clear statement that they came under the ambit of the 1969 State Services Remuneration and Conditions of Employment Act. The corporation could, however, also employ people on individual contracts on terms and conditions as it saw fit. In practice, the previous agreement with the PSA limiting contracted employees to 7.5 per cent of the workforce continued.

National's act, like that of its Labour predecessor, included the possibility of both educational broadcasts and the shortwave and other overseas broadcasts being paid for separately from money appropriated by Parliament. National began by continuing Labour's policy whereby such broadcasts were paid for partially or entirely by funds from the Education and Foreign Affairs Departments respectively.

RON JARDEN

Templeton had difficulty finding a chairman for the new corporation. Various names were rejected by the Cabinet and the minister was forced to realise not only that the Cabinet included various ex-ministers of broadcasting but that the broadcasting portfolio, like education, was one in which everyone considered they had an interest and expertise. Eventually, following the suggestion of Alan Highet, Templeton gained Cabinet acceptance of Ron Jarden, principal of a Wellington stockbroking firm. Jarden, as Templeton put it, was not only an All Black but a considerable All Black and a man of high mana in New Zealand. He was also an avowed National supporter who had put his name to the 100 for Muldoon group, a counter to a Citizens for Rowling group of Labour supporters in the 1975 election campaign. National's act did not come into effect until February 1977 but Jarden was in the senior position from 1 July 1976. McIntosh wished to resign as chairman of the council and Jarden was appointed to succeed him in that post for the last seven months of the council's existence.

Jarden was given a difficult charge. Faced in 1976 with a new and unsympathetic government, Labour's organisation of broadcasting was vulnerable. Extensive discussions on broadcasting finances with the new minister and Treasury officials extended into a re-evaluation of the nature of and rationale for public broadcasting. The financial state was parlous. The major difficulty, of course, was the debt of \$38.9 million. Council and corporations were unable to pay the annual 10 per cent interest charges, let alone reduce the principal. There were further burdens. Among them was a Treasury proposal that rents be increased from 8 to 12 per cent of a

property's assessed capital value. This meant, to take one major example, that the annual payment for the Avalon complex would increase to \$720,000. The increases were announced but deferred at the council's first post-election meeting. It became clear, however, that the government was insisting on what Treasury regarded as a system of commercial rents.⁶

Jarden, in his first meeting chairing the council, said that the broadcasting system was facing a liquidity crisis and the alternative to meeting operating costs was greater Treasury control. He regarded the problems as stemming from the establishment of the two-channel system in colour without providing working capital. Treasury had acknowledged that TV2 would require bridging finance for three to five years but this had not been forthcoming. Jarden intended to raise with government the 10 per cent interest rate imposed on the capital development loans but first he wished to ensure that everything was being done to control costs. His approach became evident when TV1 proposed the development of an Anzac Avenue site in Dunedin for set construction. Jarden felt that the development should be done more cheaply by centralising production facilities at Avalon rather than beginning further large-scale development in Dunedin. The plan was abandoned.

To no avail, Jarden asked the minister of finance to reclassify the loans as capital grants. In October Jarden told the board that the corporations owed the council a total of \$7.2 million and the council's liquidity problems meant that the payment of staff salaries was in jeopardy. The following month the government declined to cancel interest payments on the capital development loans but did defer them for three months. This merely postponed the difficulties slightly; it was made clear that interest charges would attach to the deferred payments. At the same time the minister announced publicly that the broadcasting system was insolvent. The council feared the minister's inference, that broadcasters could not expect to remain independent; the TV1 chairman contended it was misleading to assume that, because of a funding problem, political control must follow.⁷

It was politically unacceptable and, in that climate, economically impossible to maintain the system of three competitive broadcasting organisations. Fraser argued that to do so would require massive staff reductions. Whether it would then be the same system was debatable. Certainly there would be no further development. This referred particularly to the coverage expansion of TV2, which could not be financed out of revenue, especially with the mounting interest charges. Jarden's answer was not only to abandon the competitive structure but also to take the co-operation between the corporations closer to the point of amalgamation. The method was well illustrated in his action on news gathering.

The news organisations were subject to continual criticism. On the election of the Muldoon administration the council instructed a working party to report on ways to make the corporations' news services comple-

mentary rather than competitive. The council was bowing to what it knew would be an inevitable requirement from the new government. It was also taking the opportunity to introduce what it had wanted from the start but had been unable to get the corporations to accept. But broadcasting staff were strongly supportive of and reluctant to abandon the competitive news service. Rather than addressing the council's topic, the working party's report focused on the desirability of competition and the difficulties involved in changing the present system. The report received little support at council level though it was forwarded, with some amendments, to the minister. Over the objections of the directors-general, Hay, the secretary, made clear that he considered the report failed to address the minister's questions and simply favoured the status quo with minor modifications. He regarded the statistics given on staff numbers as incorrect and doubted the claims made for future savings. McIntosh, too, was unimpressed and felt the report lacked conviction. In the face of staff intransigence, any changes to the news services were stalemated until July when, chairing his first meeting of the council, Jarden changed the whole process. Disregarding the entire concept of competitive yet complementary news systems, he simply required the directors-general to prepare a plan for a combined news service. The other council members acknowledged it was logical to introduce a new system as soon as practicable rather than await passage of the new legislation.⁸ Although changes did not follow immediately, the corporations accepted that the concept of having three separate news organisations was doomed.

For Jarden the major flaw in the council and corporations structure was its management organisation with its unclear lines of authority. The council was pulled in two directions: it had day-to-day servicing tasks, particularly transmission provision and the purchase of programmes, and was also responsible for standards and had an inferred oversight of the three corporations but few means to force its authority. Jarden wanted and received a clear authority and his decision on the news services was his first exercise of it. His second was financial. Jarden wanted a single financial authority over the three corporations and advised that a new co-ordinated budget system would be introduced at the start of the 1977 financial year. Later in 1976 he announced a management reorganisation that would apply from the introduction of National's new act. The three corporations, television news, the NZSO, the *Listener* and a new board of management were all directly responsible to the board. The board of management consisted of the three directors-general plus the secretary of the corporation. Each had power of veto. Decisions needed to be unanimous, otherwise the matter went to the board for determination.⁹

One way of increasing income was to increase advertising. Jarden, strongly supported by the private broadcasters, argued for the introduction of complete Sunday advertising at least to radio. The private broadcasters

argued that they relied solely on advertising revenue and should be able to operate commercially on Sundays. Their organisation, the Federation of International Commercial Broadcasters (FICB), asked the council for this extension, which they considered acceptable in view of changed public attitudes. Jarden, similarly, saw no problems with Sunday advertising, and regarded it as at least a partial solution to any loss suffered by radio. Both RNZ and the FICB were asked to submit proposals on lesser forms of Sunday advertising, such as sponsorship. The reply from the independents ignored consideration of alternative forms of advertising and, instead, indicated that, if Sunday advertising were allowed, they were prepared to accept a limitation to its amount.¹⁰

But public opinion had been misread. Three separate opinion polls indicated that New Zealanders were more opposed to Sunday advertising than they had been in 1972 when the topic was last polled. The minister said that any change in the rules regarding Sunday advertising would have to be decided by the government.¹¹ The strong poll evidence meant there was little likelihood of any rapid change.

Although Sunday advertising was not introduced there were increases in television advertising levels, called for as a necessary compensation for broadcasting's financial difficulties. Such calls were heeded in the winter of 1976 when the television stations were required to close down earlier at night so as to conserve electricity. This meant a drop in revenue and so, as a temporary measure, advertising limits were raised. TV2 was allowed to increase its advertising to eight minutes an hour and TV1 allowed to do the same on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. TV1 protested, not at the rise in advertising but at the greater amount allowed to its rival; the reason was TV2's more difficult financial position resulting from its development programme.¹² Late in August 1976, with the early close-downs scheduled to finish at the end of the following month, though in fact, because of the continuing low levels of water in the lakes feeding the hydro power stations, they did continue into October, Fraser of TV2 asked for a continuation of both five-day advertising and the eight minute an hour rule. These were given for both television corporations for a further six months, to 31 March 1977.¹³ TV1 alone estimated the increase to eight minutes meant it received a further \$3 million annual revenue. The financial benefits were regarded as sufficient to justify making the change permanent and, from 1 April 1977, five day a week advertising at an average of eight minutes per hour was established.

The most significant change to broadcasting finances came when Jarden finally succeeded in getting the government to write off the \$38.9 million debt, reclassifying it as a capital grant. This was a major achievement; Templeton acknowledges he would not have been able to convince Muldoon to agree. There was, however, a heavy cost: the prime minister insisted that, with the debt written off, the broadcasting corporation

would have to return to its previous status and function out of its revenue. There would be no further borrowing. Nor would the government allow two further avenues of financial assistance: the power to pay up to two-thirds of the costs of the symphony orchestra from general funds would not be used and there would be no increase in the licence fee. The prime minister's resolve was tested intermittently but there was no change. Throughout the Muldoon administration, until 1984, the BCNZ survived on its income from advertising, augmented by a static licence fee. This was during years of inflation among the highest in the country's history. During the BCNZ era the fee income increased as more people paid it but the basic fee remained unchanged. In the year before Muldoon became prime minister, corporation broadcasters received 43 per cent of their income from the licence fee. When his government was defeated in 1984 licence fee revenue had decreased in proportion to be 18 per cent of the BCNZ's total income.¹⁴ That simple statistic defined the changing nature of broadcasting during the decade as commercial considerations became dominant.

PUBLIC BROADCASTING AND COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING

Jarden had difficulties with broadcasting accounting procedure generally: he wanted a yardstick other than profit by which to measure performance. For him, profit was not a valid concept since it was so contingent on the licence fee allocation. On the other hand, he accepted the point, argued by Collins, that profit was inextricably bound with the independence of the corporations. Jarden's solution was to differentiate the uses for the licence fee from other income. He sought a clear separation of the BCNZ's commercial and non-commercial broadcasting, defining the latter as public service broadcasting. He wanted the fee income to be allocated to the council to cover its costs and to the corporations to pay for the public service aspects of broadcasting. Other activities should be met by the corporations themselves from their own trading profits. This was the introduction to New Zealand of the concept that broadcasting itself was not a public service, but rather that public service applied only to specified aspects of broadcasting.¹⁵

Jarden's distinction was in line with international practice: most countries clearly distinguished public broadcasting as non-commercial. But New Zealand's publicly owned broadcasting system had included commercial radio since 1937 and commercial television since 1961. Broadcasting is one instance of the New Zealand experience of state capitalism in which the state has developed entrepreneurial activities. The broadcasting organisation received money from the sale of advertising, from the public via the government-set licence fee, and gave to the government in the form of

taxation on its commercial activities and surpluses from its annual endeavours. Such a policy continued into the Muldoon era with the passage of the 1977 Broadcasting Amendment Act which required the corporation to pay an annual dividend to the consolidated revenue account, with the amount of the dividend determined by the minister of finance after consultation with the corporation.

For the state-owned broadcasting organisation, the commercial income was always the greater. The NZBS received more of its income from commercial radio's advertising than from the licence fee. In 1962, its last year, the ratio was two to one, £2 million from advertising and £1 million from the licence fee. It also paid £0.3 million in taxation. The advertising to fee ratio lessened with the spread of television and introduction of its higher fee, but the commercial income remained higher. By the end of the NZBC in 1975 the corporation received \$22 million from advertising and \$17 million from the fee.

In calling for a distinction between broadcasting's commercial and non-commercial activities, Jarden was asking for something that had not only never been considered, but had always been left carefully unconsidered. For the council and its predecessor organisations all their activity was public broadcasting, required by statute and conducted for the people. Income from whatever source was used for whatever purpose over the entire system. Jarden defined two styles of broadcasting, commercial and public, and wanted to know the separate financial transactions for each. The distinction did not originate with Jarden and had been more obvious in New Zealand since Radio Hauraki illustrated that broadcasting and public broadcasting were not synonymous. But Jarden was the man who took the concept into the publicly owned system. Introduced as an accounting procedure, it took on considerably wider significance.

The allocation of the licence fee became the focus for considering the purpose of public broadcasting. There was no clear principle for its allocation between the corporations and council members felt one should be established.¹⁶ The licence fee division for 1976/77 was 36.5 per cent to RNZ, which included the orchestra's funds, TV1 and SPTV were each given 27.4 per cent and the council took 8.7 per cent. All corporations had their reasons for a greater share: TV1 carried higher transmission costs; SPTV had greater development needs; RNZ had, in addition to the orchestra, the many non-commercial stations reliant on the fee income plus commercial stations which had not returned a profit since faced with competition from television. Radio's problems rebounded elsewhere. The council's cash difficulties followed from RNZ's inability to repay money it owed the council. The television corporations had to help out. Collins of TV1 noted that his corporation's 1976/77 fee allocation was a reduction of \$70,000 a month. Adding to the financial woes was the fact that the licence fee total was decreasing, in 1976/77 \$50,104 less than the

previous year, a matter which led the corporations and council to co-operate to reverse that trend. The council made representations to the minister for changes in the methods of recording television set sales, the payment of fees and the enforcement of and penalties on defaulters. Ten per cent of sets were unlicensed and an agreement was reached to try to get all viewers into the system and to reduce the costs of collecting the fees.¹⁷

RNZ, particularly, argued that it needed a greater share of the fee income, but such contentions led inexorably to a separation of its two types of broadcasting. Taking up and continuing Jarden's point, Hay indicated that circumstances had changed with the start of the private commercial radio stations and RNZ now needed to show the purposes for which it was using the licence fee income. It could no longer take that income as properly applicable to all its stations. Hay held that if the licence fee income were shown to be used to support commercial stations then the private stations would have grounds for claiming their share. Within RNZ this was the start of a process whereby commercial broadcasting was separated from public broadcasting. Now the commercial stations were required to exist without support from the fee income.

In examining his commercial stations Hartstonge soon determined that his problem was stations which were 'not profitable and top-heavy with staff'. RNZ's commercial stations had not recovered from the start and growth of television advertising but, as the private stations indicated, profit was available in commercial radio. Hartstonge's policy, continued after his retirement by his successor Geoffrey Whitehead, was one of reducing staff by a process of attrition: people who left were not replaced. In the increased emphasis on profitability, the future was shown in 'the Wanganui experiment' where, at the local station, 2ZW, a trial was made to determine how few staff could run the station. The station lost one-third of its staff and emerged from annual losses. Hartstonge said, 'A great deal more of that had to be done.'¹⁸

The staff attrition over the entire RNZ was not initially of that magnitude. The 1402 staff of 1 August 1975 were down to 1209 by 31 March 1978. That was, however, a significant decrease and a precursor of bigger cuts to come. Not the least of the results was a return to profitability: the 1977/78 year was the first since 1964/65 in which the publicly owned commercial stations made a profit.¹⁹

The lower staff numbers and the decision to distinguish public from commercial broadcasting meant that the commercial stations began to be regarded less as traditional community stations. Jarden's new distinction and the requirement that the commercial stations be self-funding very much redefined their purpose, focusing principally on their commercial activity. The public service associated with their community emphasis was continued only so far as it could be done by the reduced staff and was compatible with commercial profit. The breakfast sessions remained locally

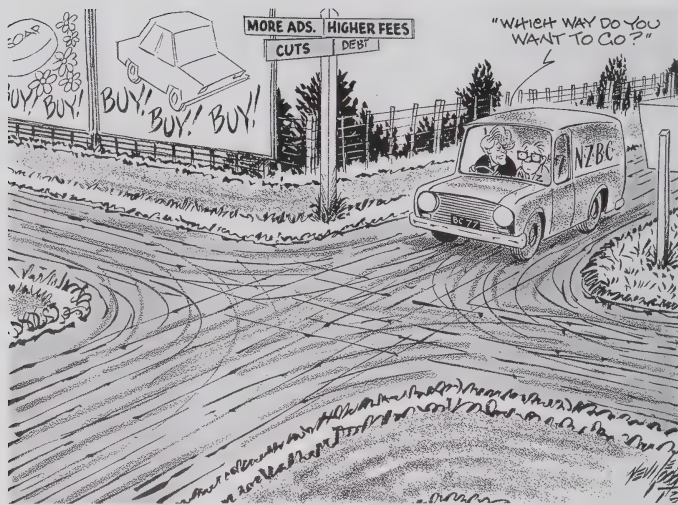
produced, and oriented to local advertising, but national networking was an increasing feature of their afternoon and especially evening transmissions. The change is well illustrated by the success of the *Tonight Show*, a linking of RNZ commercial stations. A long-time host of the programme was Wayne Mowat. When he began in 1976, eight stations joined the link. By 1982 there were 24 joining stations with a combined audience of 83,000.²⁰

Within RNZ the extra costs meant a gradual return of the strong and even bitter rivalry between the commercial and non-commercial stations, now the commercial and the public stations. Tight finances meant fierce competition for scarce resources and the amicable co-existence of the two faded. Movement of staff, especially frontpeople, from one side to the other, was strongly opposed. When both Sharon Crosbie and Wayne Mowat went from commercial ZB to public YA, commercial station executives complained loudly of poaching designed to lower the commercial stations' audience share and therefore income.²¹

BCNZ BOARD AND IAN CROSS

Templeton and Jarden together worked on appointments to the board and the first meeting was on 1 February 1977, the day the act came into effect. Jarden chaired only the one meeting; within the month he had died suddenly, aged only 47. He had already introduced significant changes to the organisation of broadcasting but was denied the opportunity to continue. After his death, C. J. Freeman acted as chairman until the appointment of Jarden's successor. Freeman, a publisher and National Party supporter, had been appointed on Muldoon's insistence,²² but this did not save him from the prime minister's later purge of the board.

The man eventually chosen by Templeton as BCNZ chairman was *Listener* editor, Ian Cross. Templeton knew Cross personally and saw him as having four main credentials for appointment: he was an experienced journalist, had mana as a writer, had business experience and was fresh from a magnificent success, commercial and cultural, with the *Listener*. What further increased his acceptance within National Party circles was the fact that he was also, although part of the broadcasting establishment, not allied to it. Editors of the *Listener* had always occupied a halfway position partly in and partly outside what was called 'the broadcasting family', but Cross had taken this ambivalence further than his predecessors with his editorial comments on broadcasting, which were less than fulsomely supportive of his colleagues. Broadcasters had always and naturally regarded any attempt to control their work as unwarranted interference and tantamount to censorship. Over the years successive governments had given broadcasters considerable grounds for such a view. Over the same years, however, broadcasting had become such an institution that, without it,



Neville Lodge in 1977 indicating the crossroads for broadcasting. *EVENING POST*

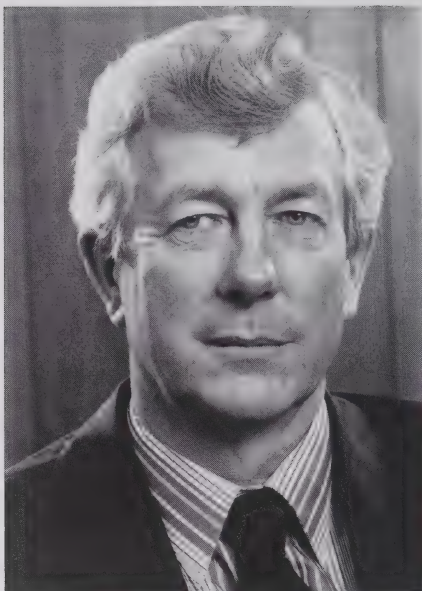
New Zealand society could not continue to function. Broadcasters accepted this status happily but were less inclined to accept that broadcasting itself occupied a position of considerable strategic power in society and, other than the regular forays from political parties and the unlikely prospect of a general public boycott, was subject to little in the way of accountability. Since the start of the NZBC, programming had been subject to approval or disapproval by board, or by government, only in retrospect. Further, Cross addressed broadcasters working in a Labour government-designed system in which greater power had deliberately been given to broadcasters rather than to administrators. An iconoclastic Cross did not accept the inviolability of broadcasting. One notable *Listener* editorial after National's return and announcement of its broadcasting plans warned against media power and argued that 'broadcasters cannot be their own judges and juries in what they do'.²³

Nor did Cross's views and his public analyses of media power stop once he became chairman and, effectively, the senior spokesman for broadcasting. In one speech he argued that broadcasting journalists should not enjoy the same freedom of expression and comment as their print counterparts because of 'television's power to overwhelm its audience'; while even the largest publication at any one moment reached only a small percentage of the population, 'television rules the entire population for an average of

22 hours a week'. This was itself an exaggeration of both the size of the audience and the grip of the medium but it did point to important differences between print and television journalism. For Cross, 'the freedom of the press when applied to broadcasting is a move from democracy to dictatorship unless proper safeguards exist to protect the ordinary citizen'.²⁴ Cross's strongest commitment was always to his understanding of the ordinary citizen. Vincent O'Sullivan, in a profile of Cross, wrote of this commitment as drawing on a kind of non-aligned radicalism that one now seldom meets.²⁵ While Cross was prepared to and did defend his staff on various occasions, he did not regard his new position as requiring him to give them unqualified advocacy. He was a head of broadcasting who acted not as a champion for broadcasters and a protector of broadcasting's rights and privileges but as a controller whose orientation was to the wider citizenry who sometimes needed protection as much as information from broadcasters.

Cross maintained this approach throughout his term as chairman. The end of his term coincided with a news item film of customs minister Keith Allen staggering away from Parliament. Competing explanations suggested that the minister's behaviour was the result either of alcohol or of medication taken to control his diabetes. The board announced the presence of a camera crew as coincidental and, in the ensuing furore, stood behind its journalists in refusing to release the name of the person who leaked the contents of a medical report on the minister. Cross, however, not coincidentally, made a speech at the time to a Rotary group in which he continued his criticisms of journalism. Beverley Wakem, then RNZ director-general, upset at the public criticism, raised the chairman's action before the board. Cross replied that he had been making the point for six years; he felt private communication with his journalists had reached its end and had spoken out publicly as a deliberate act designed to make an impact on staff.²⁶

When Cross was appointed as chairman on 16 May 1977 he had the same rights and duties as Jarden but, unlike his predecessors, Cross was appointed to a full-time paid position. Although the chief executives were the three directors-general, in practice Cross became widely regarded as an executive chairman to the extent that, on his replacement as chairman after the election of the fourth Labour government in 1984, he was asked by the board to continue in his role of chief executive and appointed as such. In many respects Cross exercised an executive authority over the existing directors-general, at least one of whom considered Cross found 'it useful that there should be uncertainty over his primary role, whether as non-executive board member or a de facto "supremo" chief executive'.²⁷ Although the executive role was what Cross called an 'informal' aspect of his position, it was a major consequence of the full-time salaried nature of his appointment. It brought tension into each of the three services as deci-



Ian Cross.

sion-making moved upward to the level of Cross and the three directors-general, either singly or in concert. Those immediately subordinate to each director-general now found themselves once more removed from decision-making.

Adding to these tensions was the fact that Cross, far more than previous chairmen, had much personal experience in and knowledge of broadcasting. He had definite views which he wished to implement. Not the least of his reasons for accepting the appointment was to protect the *Listener*, then again under threat from newspaper interests keen to divest it of its monopoly over weekly publication of programming information. He also had changes in mind for the broadcasting structure. 'I tried to do a *Listener* on the whole of broadcasting. These are the things that ought to be done. I'll set about doing them or trying to do them.'²⁸

Within the BCNZ Cross was unwelcome right from the start. While *Listener* editor, he had not been accepted by the broadcasting establishment as fully supportive of broadcasting, and now he held the most powerful concentration of broadcasting authority since ministerial control. Broadcasters generally strongly supported the highly independent three-

corporation structure which they had formed from the third Labour government's proposals. They were antagonistic to National's act, and to Jarden's administration of it, and they continued their opposition with Cross. Many broadcasters considered he was following a policy that destroyed all they held dear about their profession.

BROADCASTING EXPENDITURE

As it was for Jarden, Cross's first and ongoing priority was broadcasting's financial difficulties. The 1977/78 operating budget, with which he was presented on becoming chairman, reflected the corporations' dire financial position. Capital expenditure was reduced to \$7.8 million, even though considerable equipment needed to be repaired or replaced. Hay, who clearly regarded the warning as necessary, argued the 'first priority should be the maintenance of the present system so that the public or any section of it was not deprived of a service to which it has become accustomed'. But such a priority also meant a halt to development and the 1977/78 capital expenditure programme made no provision for various partly completed projects. So the permanent TV1 North Auckland transmitter at Maungataniwha, on which \$271,000 had been spent, languished unused for want of a further \$27,000; the permanent TV1 transmitter at Little Mount Ida for the Maniototo Central Otago region, on which \$201,000 had been spent, lay idle for want of a further \$30,000; the West Coast microwave links, on which \$183,000 had been spent, required a further \$15,000 before they could be used; and the TV1 and TV2 supplementary translators in the four main centres, on which \$320,000 had been spent, required a further \$150,000, of which only \$50,000 was provided for during 1977/78. Some of these, Hay noted, were 'visible in their state of incompleteness'. Cross also soon complained about the uncompleted transmission projects clearly visible to the public.²⁹

Matters did not become any easier as the repercussions of previous non-spending decisions were felt. In 1978 the 218-metre mast at Titahi Bay, used for transmitting the 2YA and 2YC signals, had to be dismantled and replaced at a cost of \$200,000; it was a matter of public and staff safety. It had been in use since 1936, long past its proper span, and was deteriorating at an accelerating rate.³⁰ The same year the implications of saving money by not providing security measures at the various transmission sites were brought to the board's attention when there was a forced entry into the site at Mount Erin in Hawke's Bay. There was no large-scale damage but, as Hay noted, 'If the offenders had been bent on destructive vandalism they could readily have caused extensive damage to equipment well in excess of \$500,000 and in the process would have disrupted television service throughout the country with a consequent serious loss of commercial revenue.' All but seven of the television transmission sites were

unattended and, apart from the smaller centres that had transmitters and studios in the same buildings, the same applied to all but two of the radio transmission sites. The warning was heeded and \$150,000 spent on security at the various sites.³¹

The board of management suggested various ways of improving the financial position. It asked for a licence fee increase and suggested \$60 for colour and \$40 for monochrome. It decided to seek other sources of finance for the NZSO and asked the orchestra's general manager to review both the size and the level of the orchestra's activities. It also agreed to seek further funds from Treasury. The difficulty with these suggestions, which bordered on the plaintive, was that they all required outside intervention. A further suggestion, which would have required the approval of the Broadcasting Tribunal, was to increase advertising on television to six days a week. Within the BCNZ, however, both Hay and Whitehead recorded their reservations about this; it was acknowledged as an option of last resort.³²

MULDOON AND BROADCASTING

Any BCNZ search for outside financial assistance foundered on the rock of the prime minister who remained opposed to the corporation doing other than living off its own revenue. Cross regarded Muldoon as 'an explosive power that had to be handled with care',³³ but such careful handling was not possible in the 1970s. The Robert Muldoon who had effortlessly dominated an obsequious NZBC in the 1960s and used broadcasting to assist his personal rise to political prominence and, from 1972 to 1975, his party's return to power, now faced a changed situation. Broadcasters were no longer prepared to accede to the requirements of politicians and Muldoon, now as a prime minister, no longer found advantage in co-operating with broadcasters to put a government under scrutiny. Instead *he* was under examination and by broadcasters more brave and forthright than they had been a decade earlier. At times Muldoon did command broadcasting organisations, most notably on 24 July 1979 when he became the first person to speak simultaneously on both television channels and the National Radio programme. In an address to the nation he announced both the ending of the general wage order system and the awarding of a 4.5 per cent general wage increase. The following day Cross said it was a BCNZ decision to allow the triple network broadcast and pointed to various precedents within the BBC and the American networks. In a further and retrospective approval, the board announced the following month it had given the prime minister or his deputy the future right to decide whether a subject was of sufficient importance to require a broadcast to the nation. Such addresses would be for a maximum of 10 minutes and the leader of the Opposition and leaders of other parties would be given a right of reply.³⁴

Such examples, though, were the exceptions. Generally Muldoon was unable to command the BCNZ as he had the NZBC a decade earlier. He remained an active media communicator but one as interested in using radio talkback programmes and newspaper columns as in being interviewed by news and current affairs broadcasters. His relationship with such broadcasters became irrevocably confrontational. He had always regarded them with deep suspicion and now his opinions of them worsened considerably. In June 1979, for example, he refused to appear on TV1's *Dateline* current affairs programme, which was devoted to his Budget, because Ian Fraser was to be his interviewer. Muldoon had described Fraser two years before as the best of the 'current crop of television interviewers . . . who combines intelligence and restraint to a very considerable degree'. But in the strongly anti-BCNZ atmosphere Fraser was one of many who fell from grace, being described in the prime minister's third book as 'on a perpetual ego trip' and someone by whom Muldoon would not be interviewed.³⁵

THE GOVERNOR

The relationship between broadcasting, politics and the prime minister was to the fore in the saga of *The Governor*, a six-part drama dealing with the New Zealand career of George Grey, nineteenth-century Crown colony governor and prime minister. The programme, made by TV1, was New Zealand television's most ambitious undertaking yet. Among various honours it earned Tony Isaacs, the producer, the 1978 Best Drama Feltex Award. The programme also received an unprecedented public and political scrutiny.

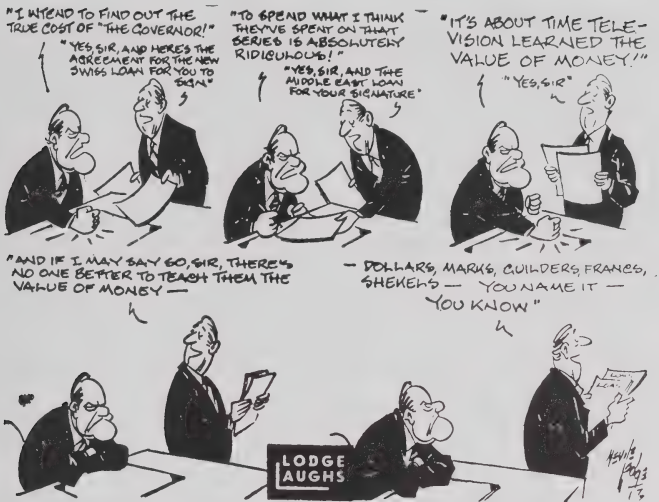
The programme planning began in 1972 when the NZBC commissioned an outline for the series from writer Michael Noonan. The eventual series was 465 minutes long, used 500 actors and was filmed around 20 different sets of colonial New Zealand rebuilt in the Hutt Valley. But in 1972 it was soon realised the corporation did not have the experience for so large a project and the topic was shelved. Over the next two years Noonan and producer Tony Isaacs were principals in the making of the 1973 60-minute historical drama, *Richard John Seddon*, concerning the life and times of the Liberal leader, and the 1974 series, *The Longest Winter*, three 60-minute programmes concerning the New Zealand experience of the 1930s Depression. *Richard John Seddon* won the Feltex Programme of the Year Award and *The Longest Winter* the Script of the Year Award. In 1975, soon after the formation of TV1, it was decided that the corporation now had the necessary experience and Noonan and fellow writer Keith Aberdein were commissioned to research and write the series on Grey, using dramatic techniques similar to those developed in the two previous programmes. In November 1975 the project was postponed for 12 months when it was realised that more preparation was needed in all areas. There were various

further difficulties, especially severe floods in the Hutt Valley in mid-December 1976 which destroyed most of the sets for the exterior locations. But filming started on schedule in January 1977, finished on time and the series was screened starting on Sunday 2 October 1977.

Grey was played by the English actor Corin Redgrave, happy to be in such a large project which, he said, would not be available for him in England. The rest of the cast were mainly New Zealanders. The series was generally regarded by critics as a success and drew excellent audiences. Speaking 11 years later, when he left New Zealand television, Des Monaghan pointed out that *The Governor* remained 'the highest-rating drama ever to play in this country, from any source'.³⁶ The series gained much attention. The dramatic portrayal of the early relationships between Maori and European was one of the earliest and, to that date, most public and prominent, of the critical re-examinations of the nature of New Zealand race relations. Although this was contentious and not popular with all viewers, it was very much the type of portrayal and examination of New Zealand's own culture and history that was the province of the country's television service.

The programme gained most attention, however, not for its theme but for its cost; this was a topic of considerable discussion even before the programme was screened. *The Governor* was TV1's biggest and most expensive drama project by far, which led the *Auckland Star* to observe, 'While TV1's patriotism in recreating the life and times of Governor Grey may be cause for applause, the fact that it has done a Cecil B de Mille has brought a top-level attack on its economics'.³⁷ The fact that this attack was led by the prime minister did not meet with universal approval. The *Christchurch Star* noted, 'The cost of *The Governor* would not have become such a controversial issue had the Prime Minister not said he thought the cost "greatly excessive". Mr Muldoon has given an unwelcome impression that he is seizing whatever stick he can find to beat the television channel.'³⁸ Because of Muldoon's involvement, the costs of the programme, and the budgetary system in the television corporations generally, were examined at the highest political level. When Muldoon wrote to Bill Birch, chairman of the Public Expenditure Committee, suggesting an investigation into the cost of producing the programme, the Television Producers' and Directors' Association (TVPDA) saw the fears of political interference it had expressed at the introduction of the new Broadcasting Act, becoming reality.³⁹

The BCNZ was told the thrust of the examination, by a subcommittee chaired by Birch, was towards the systems of programme expenditure control and the rationale for the allocation of licence fees.⁴⁰ It was soon revealed that costing a television production was not an easy matter in which final costs were predetermined. The subcommittee accepted that film productions — *The Governor* was filmed rather than videotaped —



Lodge's cartoon in the *Evening Post*, 7 September 1977. *EVENING POST*

generally estimated an anticipated expenditure, with the budget being altered continuously as the production proceeded. The production involved other agencies, some of whose costs were not obvious. TV1 had a contract with the National Film Unit in which the NFU supplied staff, material, services and facilities to a total of \$135,000. This was clear but, on the other hand, the New Zealand Army was also involved, initially to provide extras for the crowd scenes but eventually and mainly to provide transport and catering. The Army was not paid in cash but by way of TV1 advertising for defence recruitment. How to cost this was still being debated at the time of the investigation.

So the costs of the programme were a matter of contention. The rising nature of the budget was carefully examined. The subcommittee's probe found the first target budget was \$365,000 but, after filming, the final estimate given was \$705,000. These costs were apportioned by taking \$12,000 from the \$650,000 total drama budget in 1975/76, \$400,000 from the \$850,000 budget in 1976/77, \$215,000 from the \$630,000 in 1977/78, leaving \$78,000 to be taken from the 1978/79 budget. Generally the subcommittee accepted this escalation. It understood the production was innovative and was mindful of Isaacs's argument that major drama production in New Zealand was so irregular that any budgetary experience gained tended to be lost between productions. The sub-

committee eventually commended the production team for the efforts they made to contain the growing expenditure.

But there was criticism of the methods of recording expenditure during production — it was ‘not possible to monitor actual spending as it occurred or to reconcile actual spending with computer records’. This was a complaint that had long been accepted privately within the BCNZ and its predecessors. The reporting of budgets and, especially, the details of actual spending came in too late for the senior executives to have much other than retrospective control. The problem was well expressed by Tahu Shankland in 1973 when he was controller of television programmes. ‘It is now the middle of July and we have yet to receive the April and May budget reports. Ideally we should be in the position of issuing reports no later than the middle of the following month so that Producers can know how their budgets are holding out, so that Managers can keep their producers in check and so that we in Head Office Television can keep control of the overall budgetary position.’⁴¹

The subcommittee reserved most of its criticism for the higher TV1 administrators and their budgetary process generally. It disputed the \$705,000 total cost and argued the real total cost was \$1,363,700, nearly equal to TV1’s total drama budget for two years. The difference lay in TV1’s counting only above-line costs, a term which, the subcommittee decided, ‘appears to be used by the Broadcasting Corporation to cover those costs for which outside payments are made, or for items taken out of stock and used up in the production process. Examples include artists fees, copyright, outside production facilities, sound tape, film, wardrobes, travel, transport, makeup, stationery etc.’ The above-line costs were later revealed to be \$1,550 per minute, which was not inordinate and not far above the \$1,454 per minute above-line costs of the then running *The Castaways*.⁴² Once below-line costs, or costs incurred in keeping the corporation in existence, regardless of particular productions, were added, the difference was marked. The major below-line cost was salaries. TV1 acknowledged that these added \$456,445.30, giving a total of \$1,161,445.30. The subcommittee’s higher cost was the more realistic since it included as below-line costs not only salaries but also the use of such internal resources as studios and motor vehicles along with set-making and film-processing facilities.

Because *The Governor* screened on Sundays, there was no advertising income and only overseas sales offset the cost. These brought in what the subcommittee referred to as a ‘paltry’ \$8,100 and compared unfavourably with TV2’s *Hunter’s Gold*, ‘a relatively simple series’ that had returned \$225,210 in overseas sales. The investigation was extended to include another programme, *The McKenzie Affair*, produced jointly by TV2 and Scottish Television. The subcommittee decided that ‘in neither television service [TV1 and TV2] is there currently a sufficiently comprehensive and

detailed system for taking into account the full range of costs'. In all, the subcommittee offered four findings: total resource use was not taken into account; the delegation of spending authority to production level for drama was not balanced by any corresponding accounting responsibility at management level; appropriate financial expertise was lacking at production level; and documentation was inadequate and did not permit proper budgetary control.⁴³

The investigation into *The Governor* was a result of antipathy from the government generally, and the prime minister particularly, towards the BCNZ. The findings had longer term implications. The BCNZ use of above- and below-line distinctions convinced many in the government that the corporation was neither willing nor able to understand, let alone control, its costs, was unable to separate its commercial and licence fee activities, and continued to dominate and repress the independent programme-makers. With private broadcasters likely to increase under National's legislation, many in government saw a need for substantial change to ensure that the public broadcaster did not use its licence fee income unfairly to dominate private commercial broadcasting.

THE BATTERED BABY

The end of the inquiry into *The Governor* did not mean a halt to government antagonism towards the BCNZ, particularly from the prime minister. In one extraordinary seven-week period in March and April 1979 Muldoon devoted his columns in the weekly journal, *Truth*, to broadcasting, making various suggestions, all of which were widely reported elsewhere. He mused on the future of the second channel, announcing that cutting it out completely was one option under government consideration, as a way of cutting broadcasting costs. Next he suggested it be leased at weekends to private enterprise, by which he meant newspaper groups. With Sundays being non-advertising days and Saturday nights the lowest night of the week for audience numbers and, therefore, advertising revenue, Muldoon acknowledged changes would be necessary and accepted Sunday advertising would have to be introduced. Selling TV2 was a further option, which prompted the leader of the Opposition to state that a Labour government would take it back without compensation. The television critic Warren Mayne noted in late April that by the time Muldoon's *Truth* column stopped concentrating on broadcasting the prime minister had dismissed virtually all the suggestions he had floated.⁴⁴

Even though the suggestions were discarded, all were seen as attacks on the broadcasting system. One broadcaster, Tom Finlayson, wondered why a 'modest' projected BCNZ deficit of \$2 million caused such prime-ministerial irritation when the Railways' expected loss of \$60 million was accepted 'with mute casualness and the Topsy-like growth of the national

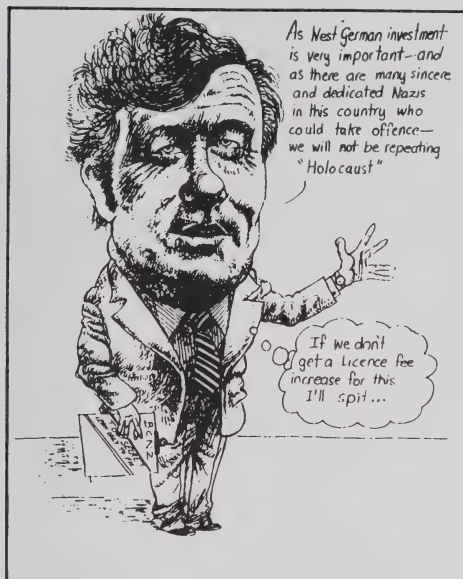
Like others,
Tom Scott
suggests Prime
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distraction.

LISTENER



superannuation scheme arouses such little ire'.⁴⁵ The Television Producers and Directors' Association (TVPDA) considered 'the prime minister obviously finds television a convenient distraction as the country hovers on the brink of bad economic times'.⁴⁶ In a celebrated and often repeated charge, Ian Cross described broadcasting as 'the battered baby of New Zealand's parliamentary democracy'. For Cross the problem was that both sides were motivated by partisan suspicion that, in some way or other, broadcasting was manipulated by the other party.⁴⁷

Such manipulation could seldom be stated conclusively but various incidents continued to keep suspicion of its existence in the public mind. The most discussed occurred in 1980 and surrounded another programme that became famous for not being screened. *Death of a Princess* was a British programme concerning the execution of a member of the Saudi Arabian royal family after her adultery with a commoner. The Saudi Arabian government exerted its considerable pressure to stop the screening. It was screened in many countries and not screened in many others. In New Zealand the prime minister made it clear the programme should not be screened because of the trade implications. The programme had an unusually stringent vetting procedure and was eventually rejected by the BCNZ board, which required it not only to undergo the normal audition process but also to be reported on with respect to six questions. Further, the secretary of the corporation was required to consult with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the diplomatic and trade implications. Although the programme had some excellent overseas reviews — the *Washington Star*, for example, called it 'an exquisitely produced, artistically beautiful



Tom Scott,
2 August 1982.
LISTENER

“non-fiction” drama’ — it was also regularly attacked for its lack of quality. Tom Scott of the *Listener* argued that was ‘no bar to its screening, as even a cursory glance through the pages of this publication will demonstrate’. He accompanied the article with one of his more caustic cartoons. One of the few New Zealanders to see the programme, Dr James Veitch, a lecturer in religious studies at Victoria University, saw ‘no reason apart from reasons of trade and oil’ why it should not be shown in New Zealand. Allan Martin and Des Monaghan of TVNZ publicly advocated screening the film. With such support the eventual decision not to screen the programme did nothing to allay fears that the BCNZ was unable to operate beyond the control of the government.⁴⁸

COMMERCIALS AND INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION HOUSES

Among the prime minister’s supporters in his complaints about *The Governor* were the independent production companies, who saw such large-scale productions as limiting even more their own slight access to television funds. They were also concerned about the television corpora-

tions' entry into what they had considered their own preserve, the making of television commercials. During the NZBC years there had been regular suggestions that commercials be made within the corporation but these had always been resisted by senior executives who regarded this as a misuse of public resources. In the three corporations not only had this earlier restraint gone but post-NZBC broadcasting operated under a commercial imperative as never before. Searching for profit-making activity, both television corporations, though TV1 in particular with its production capacity at Avalon, began making commercials. Not only were the corporations considerably larger production organisations than any of the independents but their above- and below-line accounting distinction allowed them to produce commercials at a price no independent could approach. The independents complained that the corporations were charging for producing commercials at even lower rates than their accounting system allowed. In 1975 Cole Catley called for a council investigation of the matter. This decided that the allegations were unfounded, but they continued. The following year John O'Shea of Pacific Films surmised 'that the channels are discounting production costs and recovering by the sale of (advertising) space'. W. R. M. Shaw, TV1's controller of sales and marketing, disputed the evidence. Yet Wayne Tourell, executive director of the New Zealand Producers', Directors' and Writers' Guild, wrote of one example 'where a full day was spent recording in a studio, with a full crew and facilities and the charge to the client was \$250. Yet to outside houses it costs \$180 for a half hour's dubbing.' Tourell concluded, as did O'Shea, 'Obviously they enjoy losing money to create a steady income of advertising revenue.'⁴⁹ The television corporations' discounting actions could, of course, equally be seen as normal business activity while attempting to gain access to a new area of endeavour.

It was a double blow to the independents, whose hopes for a ban on imported commercials were also dashed. Roger Douglas had agreed that overseas commercials should not be imported and made a press statement that a ban would apply from 1 July 1974. But the Ministry of Foreign Affairs argued this was against the provisions of an OECD agreement signed by the government at about the same time and the Cabinet Economic Committee rescinded Douglas's earlier announcement. There were suggestions that the council could ban the imports on its own authority but it refused to do so, accepting only that it would keep the topic under review. This decision did not impress the independents, who noted that Australia, which had banned imported commercials since television began there, had no such inhibitions. Most of the imported commercials were Australian made and the difficulties were exacerbated by the New Zealand failure to match the Australian ban. As D. B. Whyte, director of Reynolds Television, pointed out, anyone wishing to sell in both Australia and New Zealand had to either make two commercials or, and this was the common practice, have

one made in Australia for use in both countries. The independents rallied behind Tom Cook, managing director of VidCom, New Zealand's largest private production house, in support of his submission to both limit overseas commercials and stop the two television corporations from producing commercials. But no changes were introduced.⁵⁰ In 1978 the BCNZ agreed to write to the Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies (AAAA) asking it to impose a self-regulation restricting overseas television commercials with the aim of assisting New Zealand producers to supply 90 per cent of the commercials. This was unsuccessful and little more than a forlorn attempt to pass the decision elsewhere.⁵¹

COMPLEMENTARITY AND AMALGAMATION

Like Jarden, Cross answered the financial requirements of the BCNZ by accentuating a broadcasting co-ordination particularly between the two television channels. With Cross this ended in an eventual amalgamation which, though possible under the act, was not required by it. Financial needs were important in this decision but Cross also wanted a complementarity in television programming which he regarded as unattainable without amalgamation. 'It is simply not possible', he considered, 'to produce a cross between the fighting cocks of commercial competition and the love birds of complementary programming';⁵² this was essentially the same conclusion drawn by Martin and Morris in 1975. But, unlike them, he opted for complementarity, which he saw as necessary on two grounds. First, the audience required it. Cross considered New Zealand viewers might be satisfied with two channels offering similar programming if there were three channels to choose from, but that this was not the case with only two. Second, complementarity was fiscally imperative. He saw no economic sense in competition between the two channels, in attracting a bigger audience to either channel at the expense of the other, particularly in the advertising income-driven years ahead. Cross saw competition as highly wasteful of resources, with millions spent on programmes that were then pitted against each other rather than having their full potential exploited. This view applied to all programming and, in terms of its cost, particularly to news.

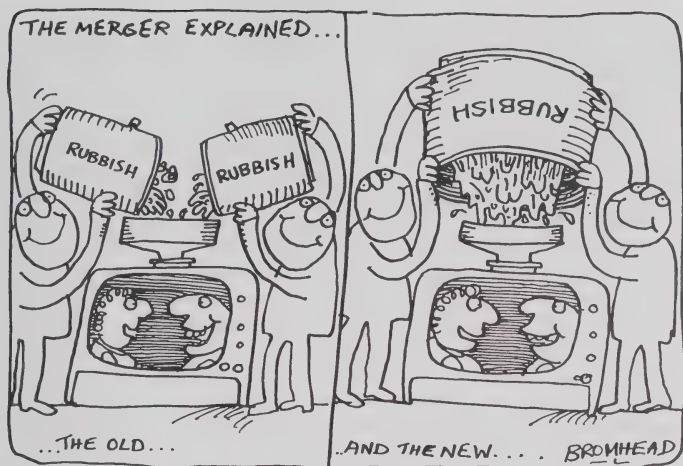
Complementarity was the most notable failure of Labour's 1973 act. Aimed for in the legislation and continually called for by the Broadcasting Council, it had been discarded by the broadcasters in favour of two competitive mainstream channels. Dorothea Turner, a member of the Adam committee, commenting publicly on the new structure in March of 1976, considered both channels had failed completely to fulfil the objectives and aspirations of the committee's White Paper.⁵³ Not until mid-1976, well after the change of government when it was clear the broadcasting regime would be significantly changed, did TV1 and SPTV agree that it was desir-

able to co-ordinate their programme scheduling so as to give viewers real choice, especially during peak viewing times and when both channels were commercial.⁵⁴

Agreement was easier than implementation and the two channels were slow to change. It was a year before details were made definite. These included an understanding that the hours from 6pm to 10pm were prime time, and that in this period the two channels should have three common junctions each night. In prime time TV1 should schedule 38 per cent of local material nightly, which meant one hour in addition to the news, and TV2 should schedule 25 per cent, or half an hour in addition to the news. 'Programmes of substance' were not to be scheduled against each other. Each channel was to schedule a weekly minimum of 40 minutes of religious programming and one hour of arts and serious music material. Neither channel could schedule more than three crime shows weekly between 8pm and 10pm.⁵⁵ In spite of the agreement these rules were not always followed. Some were adapted. Three months later, after difficulties defining the phrase 'programmes of substance', it was decided to amend the requirement so that programmes in similar categories were not screened against each other. It was also agreed that local productions should not clash, regardless of their categories.⁵⁶ Again, agreement was easier than action. Early in 1978 it was accepted that having three common junctions per night was not always possible.⁵⁷ There were difficulties in co-ordinating programming between what were still separately run channels but these were greatly increased by the broadcasters' reluctance to mute their competition. This not only hampered complementarity but also acted against minority interests featuring on television. Hay referred to community expectations for programmes featuring the NZSO, ballet and education which had not been fulfilled.⁵⁸

During his first six months as chairman Cross decided that complementarity would be achieved only if the two television channels were joined under single control. Although he knew what he wanted to do, he decided to wait until after the 1978 election. He knew the proposals would 'raise hell' among broadcasting staff and doubted whether the government would accede to his proposal for fear of creating another election year broadcasting *cause célèbre*. Immediately after the election he presented his plans to Templeton who accepted them. The debate at board level was vigorous and Cross won by one vote.

It was in mid-February 1979 that Cross finally announced the details of the new broadcasting system which was to take effect at the start of 1980. TV1 and TV2 were to join in a unified two-channel operation. The new administration would have two services each with responsibilities for both channels. Network services, to be headed by Alan Morris, the former TV1 director-general, was responsible for scheduling programmes, buying overseas programmes and for advertising. The other area was production ser-



Cartoonist Peter Bromhead offers his contribution to the discussion following Cross's merger of the two television channels under a unified control.

AUCKLAND STAR

vices, responsible for all New Zealand productions. It was headed by Allan Martin, the former TV2 director-general. The new system, Cross contended, would bring 'the kind of complementary programming which a two channel public broadcasting system can provide'. Television New Zealand, the title for the amalgamated two-channel system, began transmissions on 16 February 1980. In retrospect Cross accepted that the biggest mistake of his reorganisation was to split the functions of the two television directors-general: he should have appointed a single director-general of television and an assistant director-general. This, however, would have meant demoting or removing either Morris or Martin.⁵⁹ The position was rectified with the later retirement of Morris and Martin's appointment as director-general of TVNZ. Morris complained that his retirement was foisted on him and not of his making.⁶⁰

The great majority of editorial opinion supported the changes. The Labour Party expressed doubts about the new system but Cross argued that his proposal for a common news service and more co-ordinated services generally for the two channels was much closer to what was mooted in Labour's 1973 Adam report than actually appeared in the 1975 dual system.

The strongest opposition to Cross's proposal for amalgamation came from within broadcasting. The three corporation directors-general were

loath to lose any of their independence and reluctant to accept criticism of their operations from outsiders, including BCNZ officials. Shortly after Cross was appointed chairman, A. G. Paterson, the BCNZ head of programme standards, noted on the *Dateline Monday* programme of 5 September 1977 a reporter saying, 'When National put up their [superannuation] package in 1975 they didn't really expect to win the election and didn't pay enough attention to the details of the plan and now they find themselves with an enormous and unsustainable burden.' Paterson wrote to Morris, the TV1 director-general, arguing that this seemed to be going beyond the brief of a television reporter and asking if he would like to comment. Rather than addressing the point, Morris's reply was to question rhetorically where the responsibility of the head of programme standards lay. With such disputes over jurisdiction the BCNZ, like the Broadcasting Council, had difficulty exerting control.⁶¹

Opposition to Cross came not just from the directors-general but from all levels of broadcasting employees; journalists in particular were bitterly disappointed at the changes. Their union, the Association of Broadcasting Journalists (ABJ), argued that TV1 and SPTV 'have now become no more than positions on a dial' and expressed their great concern about news, current affairs and information programmes which 'should not be brought back under a corporate structure which is ultimately political controlled'.⁶² Although this ignored the matter of the ultimate control of the existing system, the ABJ passed a motion of no confidence in Cross and called for his resignation.

The reaction of broadcasting staff to the proposal was crucial. Particularly through their union, the PSA, these employees held considerable power and needed to be won over. Cross announced the details of the changes to broadcasting staff in meetings at the four centres. The meeting at Avalon, the first, was the most important. Cross regarded this as the centre of opposition. One incident that gave him this opinion had occurred earlier with a staff invitation to Roger Douglas to speak to them in opposition to National's Broadcasting Act under which they operated; it was an invitation Cross considered would have been a firing offence in most organisations but was impossible to make so in the BCNZ for fear of provoking another furore. The major problem with Avalon was the political activism of many of its journalists, something that often gave credence to Muldoon's attacks on the apparent partiality of TV1's journalism. As Peter Stewart, then controller of SPTV's current affairs programmes and later editor of the *Listener*, noted, 'They were not observers; they wanted to be leading players.'⁶³ Cross's Avalon meeting began with a call for a vote of no confidence in the corporation and a public inquiry into broadcasting. When Cross dismissed both suggestions, a quarter of the meeting walked out, but the number remaining meant Cross considered he had won at least a grudging acceptance of the amalgamation.

Changes to news and current affairs were a particular priority for Cross. Raised in New Zealand journalism, he had little respect for the standards of radio and television journalism. He regarded the results of his efforts as only partly successful, because of what he saw as a general paucity of talent and because of the political opposition within the corporation staff to the reamalgamation generally and his policies in particular. Certainly many broadcasting staff, particularly journalists, remained in favour of the earlier system but carried out the significant changes professionally. The amalgamation, the most important of Cross's changes, in itself largely overcame any problems of staff spread too thinly and inexperienced people in too-senior positions.

In June 1979 Bruce Crossan, the editor of TV2 news, was appointed controller of news and current affairs for the amalgamated system. Crossan was a journalist who had moved from newspapers to the NZBC when it started in 1962. The other highly influential person was David Beatson. Sent to examine other broadcasting institutions such as the BBC and CBC, he produced a news and current affairs standard as the ideal to be followed. His work here was highly regarded by Cross and was a factor in his later appointment as editor of the *Listener*.

The most publicly noticeable aspect of the amalgamation was changed programme scheduling. As with previous boards, Cross and his board colleagues had an indirect influence on programming, but this does not mean it was insubstantial. By forming a single programming unit under Alan Morris, the board was able to influence scheduling, which Cross considered had been 'chaotic' under the competitive system. Amalgamation resulted in significantly altered scheduling practices and the emergence of a new complementarity in programming. This, however, was circumscribed by the legacy of TV1's and SPTV's short history as separate corporations. A decision was made to ensure both channels gained an equal split of the audience. Over the coming years, until the arrival of Julian Mounter, the equal split policy was the brief for Des Monaghan and one he implemented remarkably successfully. As Bryan Nicholson, of the TVNZ publicity department, noted, 'He did it week after week, year after year, within 2 percent to 3 percent.'⁶⁴ Such a policy was politically necessary, given that the two channels were emerging from a fierce rivalry and that both, though particularly TV2, feared submergence in the new environment. It did, however, dictate a continuing similarity between the two channels. There was no prospect of allowing distinct programming identities, for fear that one would then gain a substantially greater share of the audience.

BCNZ

The amalgamation improved the financial position of the BCNZ. One major saving came with the announcement that the proposed multi-mil-

lion-dollar headquarters for SPTV at Tank Farm on Auckland's North Shore was to be abandoned. The increased co-ordination between the two television channels bore financial fruit even before their total amalgamation. The BCNZ ended the 1977/78 financial year with an operating surplus of nearly \$5 million as opposed to a loss of \$2.5 million the previous year. Advertising fees and sales had been increased but, on the other side of the ledger, there had been considerable cost increases in the three years since the last licence fee rise: fuel and light charges had more than doubled, telephone rentals had risen by 58 per cent and transport costs had grown by 62 per cent.

One of the major changes in the unified system was a decrease in the number of staff employed, especially within the television channels. Staffing numbers had become much higher than intended by Roger Douglas or Kenneth Adam and various observers had commented on their levels, seeing in their reduction a solution to broadcasting's problems. Gordon Dryden noted that SPTV employed 700 and suggested a national network could be run with a maximum of 325. He argued that over-staffing had been the problem in New Zealand television all along.⁶⁵ Staff numbers were not lowered to anywhere near the level advocated by Dryden but by May 1979 they were down 3.5 per cent and continued to decline as the amalgamation was completed.

At this stage the BCNZ was in a sound financial position. Converted to a two-channel colour operation with much new equipment in both television and radio, released from its \$38.9 million debt and the associated interest charges, operating from 1980 as a monopoly two television channel broadcaster and dominant radio broadcaster, the BCNZ was capable of being a profitable business. But because of its relationship with the government the board was unsure of the corporation's future. This, coupled with the refusal of permission to borrow, meant that rather than entrepreneurial attitudes, a siege mentality developed. This was most reflected in a policy, followed until 1984, of accumulating financial reserves so the corporation would be capable of continuing in spite of any future government actions. The policy meant an unwillingness to spend in a number of areas, from programming to equipment replacement, to the construction of new buildings. The glaring, unfilled need was for a television centre in Auckland, where activity was spread over six locations, none of which was originally designed for television production and transmission.

The board continued to regard the corporation as under-funded, particularly with regard to the licence fee. The BCNZ contended that this should be high enough to fund its non-commercial activities. Again there were calls for an increase in the fee. After the amalgamation plans were announced the TVPDA called for an increase of \$25 and the minister himself stated that a \$10 increase was necessary. All such suggestions came to nothing in the face of prime-ministerial intransigence. In June 1979



Kenneth Cumberland
fronting *Landmarks*.
NZMA

Muldoon announced there would be no fee increase and suggested instead that the corporation increase its advertising times and rates and slow down the programme for expansion of coverage.

The BCNZ did announce various cost-cutting measures. The expansion programme was deferred, live sports coverage was reduced, live church broadcasts and the end of evening news bulletins were cancelled. Such measures were met with considerable disappointment. Hamish Keith, chairman of the Arts Council, described his organisation's relationship with the BCNZ as 'appalling' and was particularly disappointed at the decision to cancel a projected 13-part drama series, *Coal Flat*, adapted from Bill Pearson's novel of West Coast mining life; this Keith described as the corporation 'cutting off its nose to spite its face, cutting off the very thing that might make it relevant'.⁶⁶

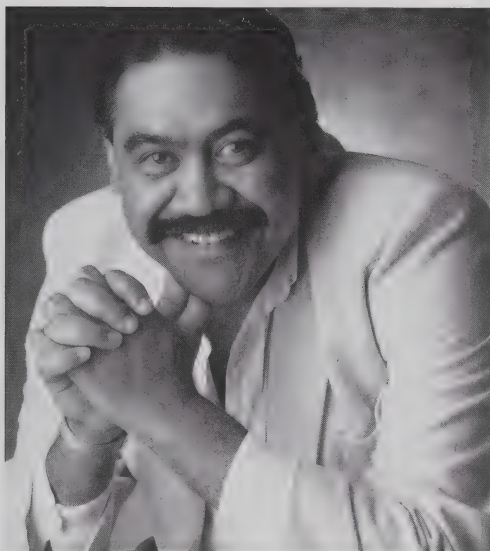
Such moves were a strong reaction to the BCNZ's financial position. Fortunately the board balanced them by also allowing some major programming initiatives. One particularly noteworthy example is *Landmarks*, a 10-part series on New Zealand's landscape and society. The financing was much aided by \$70,000 from the Department of Education and a contribution, the amount of which was not made public, from Fletcher Challenge. The Department of Education not only had the right to use the series and a book written in conjunction with it but was also entitled to use programme out-takes, material filmed but not included in the final series, for other purposes.⁶⁷ Screening on TV1, presented by Kenneth Cumberland



David McPhail as Prime Minister Muldoon on *A Week of It*. NZMA

and produced by George Andrews, the programme was three years in the making and, at the time, the most expensive and ambitious television documentary made in New Zealand. Inspired by such series as the BBC's *Civilisation* and *The Ascent of Man*, *Landmarks* offered an equally successful blending of education and entertainment and gained comparable status and importance within New Zealand.

These were also years in which the BCNZ's reputation was bolstered by local content featuring some of the most enduringly popular programmes ever screened in New Zealand. From Christchurch came the satirical programme, *A Week of It*, which first screened in 1977. It became popular immediately and was moved to a prime-time screening. Over the coming years the programme not only gained numerous awards but, more importantly, won the continuing amused and affectionate regard of its audience. Led by David McPhail and Jon Gadsby, the show was a springboard for their own future numerous television appearances and for the careers of others, such as writers A. K. Grant and Peter Hawes and actor and comic Peter Rowley. *A Week of It* was not the first successful satire on New Zealand television but it surpassed its predecessors and was a forceful reminder of the power and influence of comedy and the importance of local content on the nation's television screens.



Billy T. James. NZMA

At the turn of the decade another exceptional talent, Billy T. James, was introduced to the country. James first appeared as the compere of *Radio Times*, produced by Tom Parkinson, then leading TV2's light entertainment department. Parkinson, himself also a person of exceptional talent, had produced programmes from *Telethon* to *Hunter's Gold* to numerous light entertainment shows. He was quick to recognise and further promote James's popularity and he was given his own show, which became a series, a half hour of singing, dancing and, particularly, comedy sketches. James, Entertainer of the Year in 1984, had wide-ranging ability but was most highly regarded for his comedy. James was Maori and his sketches regularly focused on racial issues. Along with making some of the all-time classics of New Zealand television James also became a significant factor in the changing racial attitudes of the 1980s.

The conflict between the BCNZ's programming desire and its spending ability was clear in its attitude towards regional television. As part of the new amalgamated system Cross announced an emphasis on regionalism, with considerable autonomy for the television centres in the four main cities. He regarded New Zealand as a regional country with variations that should be reflected on its television screens. Once again, however, financial practicality limited action. The announcement of the regional policy was

undercut by the further announcement that the 25-person Hamilton production unit would be disbanded, which caused a storm of protest in the Waikato regarding the 'four main centres syndrome'.⁶⁸ A regional orientation is more expensive than a single national overview and the parsimonious BCNZ did not attain it.

But one major step, and an expensive one, was taken towards regionalism when Crossan announced the return of regional news magazine programmes, which he likened to the *Town and Around* programmes. The board itself decided on the placement of the programmes, at 7.30pm, in what Des Monaghan, the controller of programmes, called 'the best possible slot — the primest of prime-time television'.⁶⁹ The regional programmes, which started on 31 March 1980, were *The Top Half* from Auckland, *Today Tonight* from Wellington, *The Mainland Touch* from Christchurch and *7.30 South* from Dunedin. They were described as regional magazines and intended as entertainment programmes more than news broadcasts. All did well in the ratings, showing once again New Zealanders' liking for local television. As expected, the most successful was *The Mainland Touch*, reflecting the fact that CHTV3's transmission area covered the Canterbury region. Unsurprisingly, the programme with the most difficulties was *Today Tonight*, which had the impossible task of treating as its local region WNTV1's vast transmission area from Gisborne and New Plymouth in the north to Kaikoura and Haast in the South. *Today Tonight*, however, was also well regarded for its regional entertainment. This was epitomised by Bas Tubert who, after being 2ZB's breakfast host in the 1950s and 1960s, resurfaced as a reporter on the programme. In his fifties and so much older than his youthful television colleagues, Tubert nevertheless specialised in giving viewers a taste of unusual occupations and activities: he abseiled off cliffs, was tossed around in top-dressing planes and pitched out of kayaks. It was grand television entertainment and, for Tubert, very much 'about people . . . covering an aspect of New Zealand life you don't see anywhere else'.⁷⁰

NATURAL HISTORY UNIT

The amalgamation into TVNZ led to developments that would not have been possible for either corporation alone. One of the most notable was the establishment, in Dunedin in 1978, of the Natural History Unit. Formed to make wildlife programmes, the unit began under the impetus of Hal Weston, the manager of the Dunedin station. Weston received a QEII Arts Council bursary which he used to study British television production and the lessons it held for New Zealand and, in particular, for Dunedin. He was impressed by the Bristol-based Southern Television, which he saw as analogous to Dunedin, 'the runt of the litter'. Current affairs programmes were based in London, as were drama and light entertainment



Penguins performing for the Natural History Unit. NZMA

programmes, since the capital was the base for actors, but Bristol had a natural history unit and was also strong in the production of children's programmes. On his return, Weston argued for both natural history and children's programmes to be based in Dunedin. As he argued, 'we may never be able to compete on the world stages with our actors because they tend to go to the world stages as soon as they get to that level but our penguins can match the performance of any penguin in the world'.⁷¹ His proposal was accepted and the unit was started and based in Dunedin.

The first productions were two series on New Zealand wildlife. *Hidden Places* introduced viewers to the wildlife in remote areas within New Zealand such as Okarito Lagoon and offshore places such as Campbell Island. *Wild Track* was a magazine programme oriented towards a young audience. Both series were well received but it was the third, *Wild South*, which first screened in 1980 with five half-hour documentaries that marked the rise of the unit to both national and international acclaim. New Zealand and its offshore southern territories have magnificent scenery and marvellous and previously largely unknown wildlife. The unit's film-makers suffered considerable privation and showed remarkable patience as they waited for various species to perform. The results are a number of wonderful wildlife documentaries which have been appreciated for their sheer entertainment value but which have also played a major part in developing New Zealanders' knowledge about their country's natural habitat and their attitudes towards its conservation. The unit won numerous awards,

national and international, and became one of the jewels of New Zealand television production.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH

The fragile relationship among the publicly owned broadcasting media and between them and private broadcasters showed up in the area of audience research. The problems surfaced when the NZBC was split into separate corporations and remained under National's system. RNZ, the two television corporations and then the unified TVNZ were reluctant to share information with each other or with their controlling organisation, the BCNZ. They were also opposed to the Broadcasting Council and then the BCNZ conducting such research on their behalf. There were further difficulties in deciding to what extent the private radio stations should be allowed to share in the commissioning of and receiving the information from audience research.

Until 1975 all information from the audience research section was available only to the NZBC stations. As a selling aid, information was given to accredited advertising agencies, but not to the private stations. In 1975, once Labour's system was in place, the Broadcasting Council wanted to greatly expand its inherited system of audience research. It considered the monthly programme ratings, along with reactions from organisations who claimed to speak for 'the silent majority', an insufficient guide on public reaction to programmes.⁷² But changes were difficult to implement.

RNZ and the television corporations were also unhappy with the council's inherited pattern of audience research. Like the council, they considered it inadequate. SPTV protested at the continuing absence of information on the viewing of those aged under 10. RNZ argued that the audience research methods were unsuited to its own commercial requirements. In 1976 the corporations agreed to continue to use and pay for the council's audience research 'in the meantime', but soon advocated an alternative that was unconnected with the council or its successor, the BCNZ. The private research company, McNair, wanted to provide that alternative and advised the BCNZ to follow the overseas practice and make use of independent surveys and audience research. This was strongly supported by SPTV which argued McNair was better able to provide the information it wanted: material specifically on the Auckland market.⁷³ In 1977 Martin informed the board of management meeting that SPTV had commissioned McNair to do an April survey and, therefore, the BCNZ audience research section was not required that month. Morris was aware of the plan and said TV1 was considering sharing the McNair costs. The next month Whitehead informed the BCNZ that RNZ found the McNair surveys more useful: they were more detailed than the BCNZ's and,

because they surveyed beyond the five main centres, they were fully national and of more value than the BCNZ's sporadic sampling.⁷⁴

In February 1978 the audience research section proposed doing three television and four radio surveys during 1978–79. TV1 and SPTV said three was enough but asked for them to be supplemented with qualitative survey information. The McNair surveys commissioned by SPTV were continuing and SPTV agreed to share with TV1 information on significant trends. In March 1978, however, television and radio agreed to give the audience research section a six-month trial without the intrusion of outside surveys; SPTV agreed to abandon the McNair surveys.⁷⁵ Disagreement flared again the following month, when SPTV announced it wanted the research unit to investigate and supply information on audience flow — the way in which at least part of the audience for any programme was there because they had watched the previous programme and remained in front of their sets — which was not covered specifically in BCNZ research. TV1 did not particularly want this and it was difficult for the research section, which always had problems filling research positions with suitably qualified people, to add it to their responsibilities.⁷⁶

The differences were not due entirely to requirements for different forms of research. Added to these was a continuing wish for audience research information to be confidential to the commissioning agency. When TV1 and SPTV were amalgamated, TVNZ staff continued to express a preference for McNair as opposed to the BCNZ research section. They preferred McNair's research and they wanted to keep information from the BCNZ. Cross interpreted this as a desire to prevent the 'big brother' of BCNZ finding out about their successes and failures. This particularly applied to qualitative research which, effectively, meant the monitoring of the decisions of programmers and the standards of journalists.⁷⁷

In an attempt to widen acceptance of its audience research, in 1978 the BCNZ established an Audience Research Council with outside membership. This council was chaired by a representative of the AAAA. The Association of New Zealand Advertisers also had a representative, as did the IBA. Massey University's Market Research Centre had a representative who was seen as the independent expert. The BCNZ had four representatives, one from each service plus the head of management services. At the first meeting in May there was considerable suspicion, not all of it from outside the BCNZ. The IBA representative sought assurances that the BCNZ system was fair to the independent broadcasters, while SPTV argued that the BCNZ unit lacked credibility owing to its origins as an in-house unit. The mutual suspicions were not settled but placed aside and other matters were discussed. The responsibilities of advertising agencies were considered. Were they agencies of their clients or of the media? This was not resolved, though the council members accepted that agencies had some obligation to pay part of the research costs. There was also

discussion of both the practical difficulties and the ethical problems associated with providing commercial statistics on the under-10 group. It was not an entirely amicable meeting but at least there was a clear understanding that the groups had interests and needs in common and could work together.⁷⁸

For actual research, however, the uncertainties and mutual distrust remained. Difficulties soon arose between RNZ and the private stations. Under the new system of co-operation RNZ agreed to supply the private stations with the BCNZ audience research reports since, with more parties contributing to its cost, the research was cheaper. For instance, 1ZB and 1ZM shared with the private stations Radio i and Radio Hauraki the costs of the 1978 commercial surveys in Auckland, each station paying \$4,500 for the year. But a shared arrangement was difficult for RNZ since it made the private stations co-commissioners and thus equally entitled to determine the nature of the surveys. Matters came to a head when the private stations asked the audience research section to include qualitative programme research, something RNZ did not want. It opposed the request, arguing that it would conflict with the section's prime responsibility to RNZ. Instead RNZ suggested that, in future, the research information be supplied to the private stations on a fee basis only. This meant the private stations would be purchasers rather than co-commissioners; there would be no obligation to consult them and the surveys would be done as RNZ wished. RNZ wanted to share costs, but not power. The risk was that the private stations would refuse to continue the cost-sharing arrangements and instead start alternative surveys, most probably with McNair.⁷⁹ The chief executives agreed the risk was worthwhile and in December 1978 recommended the system be changed so that private stations were restricted to purchasing audience research head-count surveys on a fee basis.⁸⁰

Mutual suspicion from the various bodies involved applied to all areas of research, even to basic head-counting, for information concerning the size of audiences was of critical importance to advertisers who were unwilling to fully trust broadcasters, who had sound incentives to exaggerate the size of their audiences, to do the research themselves. But there were greater difficulties as research techniques developed and as broadcasters became more aware of how they could use them. Audience research became more integrated with station programming decisions and thus became more confidential to the particular station. By the end of the 1970s, broadcasters were increasingly using research to develop their own programming and regarding it as highly confidential information to be safeguarded from outside scrutiny.⁸¹ In the circumstances, two types of research developed: that confidential within each media organisation and including everything from psychological profiles of the audience to likely scenarios if particular policies were followed, and that dealing with the assessment of audience size and composition which determined, among

other matters, what advertising rates could be charged. The former remained confidential within the organisation while the latter was increasingly done outside any broadcasting group and was conducted by a neutral researcher accepted by all. This latter point was formally accepted by the BCNZ only in 1985 when it signed a contract with McNair on the sharing of a common audience research database.⁸²

SHORTWAVE BROADCASTING

The difficult relationship between BCNZ and government had its effect on most aspects of New Zealand broadcasting. One which suffered was short-wave broadcasting.

Before 1974 Radio New Zealand was the title given to the shortwave overseas broadcasts of the NZBS and then the NZBC. When Radio New Zealand became the title of a new corporation the old Radio New Zealand had to be given a new name. The March 1974 board meeting decided on the cumbersome title, External Services Division. There had been few changes in the division since it began in 1947. Its broadcasts, which went to Australia, the Pacific Islands and increasingly to Antarctica, aimed to present a New Zealand perspective rather than a general broadcasting service. In 1962, for example, Radio New Zealand was ordered to cease broadcasting any plays other than those written by New Zealanders. The Pacific Islands broadcasts were differentiated, with *Calling the Cook Islands* introduced in 1959 and *Calling Samoa* the following year, but the broadcasts were hampered by their low transmission power and consequent poor reception. A programme *Calling Malaya* was introduced in 1957, mainly for the New Zealand servicemen there. It began as a result of the enthusiasm for the special broadcasts of rugby commentaries during the 1956 Springbok tour of New Zealand which had been carried by Radio New Zealand and directed to Malaya. But *Calling Malaya* was discontinued after 24 weeks because of the poor quality of its reception. Matters did not improve over the years. In 1970 the Fijian Broadcasting Corporation stopped attempting to rebroadcast the Radio New Zealand news bulletins because of bad reception.⁸³

The problem was the 7.5kW transmitters that had been used since 1947. It was recognised that at least a 50kW, and preferably a 100kW, transmitter was needed to broadcast properly over the distances required. But this added a further problem. The transmitter site at Titahi Bay was too small to provide the necessary aerial space needed for shortwave transmission from a large transmitter and, besides, anything of suitable size would cause interference difficulties. In 1966 the NZBC sought permission to spend \$87,600 to purchase and install two 20kW transmitters, the maximum size that could be accommodated at Titahi Bay. This was by far the cheapest option but permission was denied. The 1973 Adam report included devastating criticism of the state of the shortwave service.⁸⁴ The recipient of the

report, Roger Douglas, accepted that repowering and resiting were needed. When Lance Adams-Schneider was minister he had costed this as at least \$1 million plus a \$300,000 to \$350,000 annual operating budget. In 1973 Douglas saw it as costing 'some millions of dollars' and wondered whether such expenditure should come 'from licence fee revenue paid by licence holders for domestic service'.⁸⁵ Labour's solution, the \$365,000 annual payment from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, did not long survive the change of government. Following a government general cutback in finance, the shortwave broadcasts ceased on 2 May 1976. The Cabinet ordered the halt, requiring the broadcasts to be replaced with a telex/tape service restricted to the Pacific Islands. There were considerable complaints about the change, mainly from New Zealanders in the Pacific Islands and Australia, but there was also a special representation from the Antarctic wintering party. As so often, the debate revolved around a sporting fixture. The government surrendered and the broadcasts were resumed on 5 June 1976, in time to broadcast the commentary of the New Zealand v. Ireland rugby test. The government made available \$80,000 per year via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a contribution but considerably less than full payment. The shortwave broadcasts were no longer specially designed for overseas transmission but were merely relays of the National Programme for 17 hours daily from 6am to 11pm.⁸⁶

This created further problems in 1982 when, with a general 3 per cent cost-cutting exercise under way throughout the public service, the shortwave transmissions were again threatened. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs designated its annual payments to the BCNZ as part of its cuts. And, in a continuation of the government's attacks on the corporation, foreign affairs minister Warren Cooper announced that he favoured stopping the payment because the National Programme, and particularly its news broadcasts, 'don't show New Zealand in the best light possible'.⁸⁷ The National Programme and RNZ news bulletins were designed for a domestic audience, airing and commenting on a wide range of issues of interest to the country. If most shortwave listeners were expatriates, this would have been just what they wanted to hear, but the Cabinet agreed with Cooper and announced that the Foreign Affairs grant was ended, at which point Cross said the shortwave service would stop at the end of the week. This was a bluff on Cross's part: he had no intention of allowing this to happen. The bluff was called by the government and a reprieve was announced the following week when the corporation decided to continue the service and fund it at its own cost 'meantime'. The BCNZ then waited some government action. In November 1982 Cross expressed hope for a ministerial decision before the end of the year. RNZ explored one further avenue, surveying possible participants for a public-private consortium to direct RNZ International, but, despite interest, the proposal bore no fruit.



RNZ's short-wave aerial system at Titahi Bay.

DOMINION

The loss of the Foreign Affairs grant was a blow but the main problem was the service's ancient 7.5kW equipment, and an expensive upgrade would mean higher annual running costs. The problems were increasing. In 1978 Whitehead warned that the estimated remaining life for the transmitters and aerial system was five years. He also suggested the eventual solution. The government owned land at Rangitaiki which was an ideal site for shortwave transmission. It was part of an extensive flat area with low angles of elevation on the horizon in all signal directions. It was also on the broadcasting microwave route, remote from populated areas yet within 30 kilometres of Taupo for servicing. The cost of relocating and upgrading was substantial: Whitehead estimated the establishment cost for transmitters, studio accommodation and equipment at \$7.9 million and annual operating costs at \$653,000.⁸⁸

This solution had to be accepted in the long run if the broadcasts were to continue. The resumption had merely continued the unsatisfactory state of affairs. The relay of the National Programme was scarcely designed to appeal widely outside New Zealand, though it at least had the advantage of carrying a New Zealand voice offshore. The shortwave broadcasts limped

on, with broadcasters aware of their inadequacies but unable to improve an inadequate service. In the last days of the Muldoon government Beverley Wakem, then RNZ's director-general, said that New Zealand's voice in the Pacific seemed to be a dying one. In the circumstances broadcasters adopted the view of Roger Douglas and the Adam committee and questioned whether such external broadcasting was a proper use of licence fee funds collected for broadcasting within New Zealand. Many also doubted the purpose and value of the broadcasts. Cross's view, in retrospect, is to wonder whether New Zealand should bother. 'I am not sure that anybody wants to listen to us frankly, except the Islands.'⁸⁹

EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTING

Educational broadcasting was another area in which financial difficulties brought into question the ability to perform tasks accepted as part of the duties of the public broadcaster. The problems were accentuated by the increasing emphasis on commercial programming. For education the issue was the role of television. The use of radio in education, with the Correspondence School, the Broadcasts to Schools and the many broadcasts that were forms of non-school but continuing education, was well established and continued. Television, however, had scarcely entered education in spite of long repeated acknowledgments that it should.

In 1975 Cole Catley raised the topic of television educational broadcasting with the Broadcasting Council, which decided to call a meeting of representatives from the council and television corporations to discuss the matter. The topic was taken further when the PPTA proposed using the under-utilised Hamilton studios for educational television. The National Council of Adult Education argued that educational broadcasts should not be regarded simply as an extension of the classroom and restricted to that age group. The Broadcasting Council wrote to the minister of education calling for a meeting to discuss educational television. This meeting proposed, and the council endorsed, the formation of a widely representative consultative committee, but there was no immediate prospect of educational television, particularly classroom television. The Department of Education, also under financial pressure, was unwilling to make television, especially providing receivers in every classroom, a high priority. Further, from the long experience of broadcasting to schools the department's officials did not consider the public broadcasters flexible enough to meet any changing requirements that schools might have in the future. Rather than being tied to broadcasters' schedules, the education officials wanted to use the then emerging technology of video recorders, putting programme timing in the hands of schools. The Broadcasting Council and then the BCNZ were unwilling to rearrange their priorities and take such steps as using the Hamilton studios to produce education telecasts. It did accept the submis-

sion from the National Council of Adult Education and requested the corporations to take the initiative by including in their schedules occasional programmes on continuing education. But the concentration on commercial programming presented further difficulties. The television corporations were not eager to start educational broadcasts and risk their mutual jockeying for competitive advantage. The combination of difficulties effectively prevented any educational initiative.⁹⁰

The Department of Education did become involved with particular broadcasting programmes, notably the *Landmarks* series. The department also commissioned a series of films from Dave Gibson, then starting a career as an independent producer. These were films of short stories by New Zealand authors, Katherine Mansfield and Witi Ihimaera among others. The effective exclusion of New Zealand independent producers from New Zealand television meant that the Department of Education was Gibson's sole client for several years.⁹¹

In the BCNZ era it was not until 1983 that TVNZ made proposals for educational television to the board. These did not appeal because one of their striking features was the total absence of curricula-based broadcasting, thus eliminating the five to 15 age group altogether. TVNZ acknowledged the criticism but argued that the proposal was an attempt to get something started following their considerable experiences and frustrations 'in dealing with established bureaucracies outside the corporation'. Cross accepted the point and sympathised. He, too, felt that the BCNZ was unable to interest the Department of Education. Educational television was not feasible unless it was accepted by the department, television receivers were supplied to schools and programmes could be transmitted into classrooms. This was not done. Later in the year the board argued that though it had a commitment with the tribunal for some educational television it did not have the necessary financial resources. It considered whether it should view public service radio and television as one and forgo some radio programming to financially accommodate some educational television.⁹² Again these were musings rather than definite plans of action.

Only in 1988, the final year of the BCNZ, did a definite form of educational television begin and that was at the tertiary level with the broadcasting of programmes to accompany the extramural courses of Massey University. Massey had set up production facilities in 1985 for programmes to be sent on tape to students. In its submissions to the 1985-86 Royal Commission on Broadcasting the university had argued for access to the television airwaves. Although the topic was not advanced by the commission, the BCNZ opened negotiations with the university that led to the start of programmes in 1988, screening for one hour a week on TV2. Described as 'Open University, New Zealand style', it was initially only a one-year trial and was very much a tentative venture into an area well established not only by the British example but also in many other countries.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES

Although children's programmes began with the start of television, they had not received concerted attention. The first were modelled on the radio experience and were fronted by 'Aunts' and 'Uncles'. Most were imported and 1960s New Zealand children grew up on a diet of British programmes such as *Dr Who* and *Robin Hood* and American programmes such as *Clutch Cargo*, *Rin Tin Tin* and *The Jetsons*. The difficulty was that, with transmission only starting at 6pm, there was little space for children's programmes and there were many complaints from those who felt adult programming should begin at that time. Others, however, felt differently. *Dr Who* in particular became part of many adults' viewing. More children's programmes were possible once afternoon transmission began but even so the results were dependent on individual producers performing above and beyond the call of duty. Christchurch became a major centre for children's programmes largely through the efforts of producer Kim Gabara. His main duties were sport, current affairs and telethon but in the 1970s, 'I kept tinkering away at children's programmes around my sports and current affairs duties. I felt they were just glad that somebody wanted to make children's programmes.'⁹³ His tinkering was prodigious and included *Toy Box*, *Here It Is*, *Bumper To Bumper*, *Scribbles*, *Woolly Valley*, *Woolly Hills*, *Woolly Tales*, *Woolly Manor*, *Tales of the Mist* and *It Is I Count Homogenised*.

Dunedin was also a centre for the production of children's programmes. *Playschool* began there in 1969 and was the first children's programme to have designated funding; its predecessors had been made if and when there was time and studio space. The first show screened in New Zealand designed for early childhood, it was a British programme with the studio work produced in Dunedin and edited in around the imported filmed elements. Both TV1 and SPTV had imported early childhood programmes. TV1 chose *Playschool* and on SPTV there was the American *Romper Room*. When the channels were recombined Gabara opted for *Playschool* as the better child-centred programme. *Playschool* continued until 1991 and was stopped when it had been screened so many times that all the repeat rights were used. Children's programmes can be repeated every three or four years as the age group matures and is replaced by a new group of viewers, but *Playschool* repeats were so frequent that one cohort of children watched one presenter become pregnant twice with the same child. Another important early Dunedin programme was *Spot On*, produced by Huntly Elliott. This was a highly popular Sunday magazine programme famous for its 'Young Video Makers' competition, which is still creating ripples with the talent it recognised, like that of Peter Jackson.

Another major children's programme of the time was the American *Sesame Street*, also imported but with inserts made locally. The programme

was deliberately exported to many countries with a policy that local languages could be inserted. In New Zealand it was first run in the uncut American format but, after a trip to New York's Children's Television Workshop, Gabara began producing local Maori inserts, first with Hineani Melbourne as researcher. Later Janine Morell took over producing segments.

Playschool and *Sesame Street* served as more than children's programmes. The studio elements produced in New Zealand meant they were also a training ground for producers, scriptwriters, presenters and others. Effectively the same could be said of children's television generally: experimentation was possible in a way that was not considered appropriate in other areas. The other relevant consideration was that the programmes came largely from Dunedin and Christchurch, distant from both head office and the major production areas of Wellington and Auckland. This meant less overview and a greater freedom to experiment, and children's television became a seedbed for the development of much television talent.

Over the years school-age children were given a variety of programmes which, during the 1970s, developed a distinct New Zealand approach. This brought its own problems, especially when New Zealand children's speech was accepted and, indeed, exaggerated by Stu, the compere of TV1's *Nice One*. The schoolboy Stu, played by 24-year-old Stuart Dennison, was highly popular with his young audience but drew an extraordinary number of complaints from adults, 1000 letters on one day alone, regarding his speech. For a while Dougal Stevenson, ex-newsreader for TV1, was brought in to point out Stu's errors of pronunciation. The furore added to the show's popularity and the council, which had tried to influence *Nice One*, eventually surrendered, accepting it could interfere no further in TV1's programming powers.

The disquiet over *Nice One* was exacerbated by a more general unease over children's television. The most public result of this was the 1978 founding of the pressure group, Monitor. The main personality involved was the playwright, Roger Hall. He did not join the agitation over Stu's language on *Nice One* — indeed he enjoyed the programme — but he was concerned by what he saw as a commercially induced drop in standards in television production generally and children's television particularly. Monitor was founded in Dunedin, where Hall called a public meeting. The audience of over 300 reflected the existence of considerable public feeling. Monitor wanted an improvement not only in standards but also in the variety of children's programmes, and called for the recognition of children's television as a specialised area.

This last point was answered in 1979, the International Year of the Child, when Dunedin's Hal Weston was appointed the first head of a distinct children's department. A fine range of programmes followed in the 1980s as a result of having a dedicated budget. But the founding of the

new department did not lead to any notable loosening of the purse-strings by the cash-strapped BCNZ and the need remained to encroach on other areas to fund the children's programmes. Weston described *What Now*, one of the more successful 1980s children's programmes, as 'Clever things you can do with string with the money left over from other tasks'.⁹⁴ *What Now*, produced by Rex Simpson, began in Dunedin, where it was first titled *Howzat*, and moved with Simpson to Christchurch in 1982 with Steve Parr fronting the programme. It continued the pattern of experimentation and, among other innovations, introduced New Zealand television's first live phone-ins, a television version of radio's talk-back. Such format innovation continued under producers Keith Tyler-Smith and Janine Morell, along with the first interactive television with computer games. Another result of the new attention to children's television was *After School*. Its presenter in the early and mid-1980s was Olly Ohlson, a man popular with his audience and who also drew critical praise right from his first year when he was judged the best new talent on television. Ohlson, a Maori, put much emphasis on language, bringing Maori phrases onto the programme and teaching correct pronunciation, but also introducing other non-English languages spoken in New Zealand. A further programme, *Video Dispatch*, was broadcast weekly, reviewing local and international affairs for younger viewers. It attracted a wider audience in spite of its 4.30pm slot.

RADIO NEW ZEALAND AND THE NZSO

Much of the questioning about the purpose of public broadcasting focused on the symphony orchestra. Since the days of Shelley, the orchestra had been regarded as epitomising the public service role of broadcasting, but now its legitimacy was being challenged. The nub of the criticism was the financial relationship between RNZ and the orchestra. It raised a problem inherent in an organisation required to be financially solvent while maintaining a public service.

The broadcasting structure's financial difficulties were particularly harsh for RNZ. Even increasing revenue by extending advertising time had not been enough to end the television corporations' woes. For RNZ it was worse: increases in advertising drew advertisers to television and away from radio, thus decreasing radio's advertising revenue. In March 1976 the council was told that RNZ's projected loss for 1975/76 was \$1.4 million. There was no prospect of RNZ trading itself out of its difficulties. It had already increased advertising rates but net sales had dropped 20 per cent, mainly as a result of the competition for retail advertising from television. At this stage Downey, RNZ's chairman, made a public statement indicating his corporation's problems and advising that drastic action was needed to cut costs. McIntosh and other council members considered the state-

ment most unfortunate and a disservice to broadcasting but Downey argued that the public needed to be informed.⁹⁵

RNZ's greatest financial difficulty was the symphony orchestra. With the passage of Labour's Broadcasting Act, and after initial disquiet at the terms proposed by the council, RNZ accepted that it be responsible for the orchestra. For four years from 1 April 1975 all the powers under section 12 of the act were delegated to RNZ. Orchestra members were RNZ employees. There was sense in this decision, since the orchestra did almost all of its broadcasting on radio, but it was a heavy financial burden. RNZ had to pay the costs of the orchestra which averaged around \$1.5 million a year. In theory, the orchestra was also supposed to be supported by the television corporations, in return for broadcasts, but in practice this did not happen. The mainstream television channel did not want the classical fare offered by the orchestra and when the second channel began, rather than ushering in minority programming, it signalled the start of a more intensive competition for the majority audience. Besides, the orchestra brought with it a big annual price tag and because both channels knew that any use of the orchestra required them to pay their share, they had a strong incentive to abstain.⁹⁶

The orchestra received attention in the 1976 act. It was to be controlled and administered by the corporation and, in any year, up to two-thirds of its cost could be appropriated by Parliament. This was a repetition of a provision in the 1973 act and seemed to be a recognition of the broadcasting view that the orchestra was a national rather than merely a broadcasting asset and that its cost should be shared more widely. Although such an acceptance was made in principle, in practice, for National as for Labour, there was no change. The BCNZ at different times asked the National government to contribute two-thirds of the cost of the orchestra, as provided for in the legislation. Even when such a request was supported within the Cabinet by Templeton, the minister, and D. A. (Alan) Highet, minister for the arts, the prime minister was unmoved. Throughout the years the act held, there was no appropriation from Parliament towards the orchestra's costs. In fact, there was little government interest in its fate. During a visit to the BCNZ, Muldoon responded to questions about the orchestra's finances by asking, 'Why not cut the number of musicians?' The board was shocked that the prime minister was serious.⁹⁷ The financial onus was clearly on the BCNZ.

There were always complaints about the orchestra's costs and suggestions that these be reduced by such means as holding fewer concerts outside Wellington. SPTV's chairman, Fraser, an admirer of the orchestra, voiced the dilemma when he described the orchestra as both 'a national cultural asset' and 'a millstone for the entire [broadcasting] system'. In spite of the government's refusal of funds, there was never an intention to push such complaints to the point of jeopardising the orchestra. Within

broadcasting it was lamented for its expense but regarded as a cultural jewel. Templeton, all senior broadcasters and many of the public had a deep regard for the continuing well-being of the orchestra. When he became chairman Cross continued the same support. He had attended one of the very early concerts and had remained a fan. 'It was in my bones. The symphony had to exist.' He considered it was unacceptable to downgrade it to a second- or third-rate orchestra. The BCNZ, and RNZ in particular, went on supporting the orchestra. Ironically, the orchestra was relatively free of the financial restraints that bedevilled the rest of broadcasting, secure in the knowledge that, come what may, the orchestra would survive. This was clear in the procedure for apportioning the licence fee. In April 1975 the licence fee for the 1975/76 financial year was divided so that, first, sufficient funds, \$1.1 million, were allocated to the orchestra, and \$1.5 million to the council to service loans. Only then was the balance divided between the three corporations.⁹⁸ Such priorities continued. In 1983 the board endorsed Cross's new licence fee allocation guidelines: the symphony orchestra had first call and the remainder was shared equally between TVNZ and RNZ.⁹⁹

The orchestra's income would have been greater if it were a regular television performer and there were attempts to increase such appearances. These had only limited success and, as ever, the orchestra's major emphasis was on concert performances. TVNZ's reluctance to telecast the orchestra was increased by its own understanding of its purpose. This was illustrated in 1983 when the orchestra's general manager told the BCNZ that, though more was being done in co-operation with TVNZ, the old difficulties remained. He pointed out that one of the orchestra's responsibilities was to introduce audiences to new music, which meant an unpredictable reaction — not what television programmers wanted. The board asked the general manager to consider approaching the government to allow sponsorship of the orchestra, with such sponsoring being tax deductible, but nothing came of this.¹⁰⁰

Cross was one of many who considered the orchestra was less entrepreneurial than it should and would be if it were not in such a financially sheltered position. But there were definite limitations to any financial expectations of the orchestra. Its gross income was around 20 per cent of its expenditure. The board suggested the aim should be 33 per cent but the general manager argued this could be achieved only by an orchestra in the international 'big league'. That was feasible but the orchestra would first require freedom from union staffing restraints plus the necessary additional finance. The suggestion was not followed. The orchestra had a guaranteed income, but it was limited. In these years, however, the orchestra responded by increasing the quality of its work and enhancing its reputation. Its first tour overseas, when the orchestra gave nine concerts in Australia in 1974, was seen as marking the NZSO's 'transition from

national to international stature'.¹⁰¹ As if to note this change, the orchestra was renamed in the 1976 act: the National Orchestra became the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, NZSO.

The greater significance of the name change, however, was to mark a distinction between the orchestra and broadcasting; only in 1988 did the NZSO become separate from broadcasting. Broadcasters wished to push the orchestra from their nest, to remove it from their financial responsibilities. They wanted the government to recognise the orchestra as a 'social asset' to be funded by the government rather than by broadcasting organisations. Their attempts began with the changes introduced during the third Labour government and continued during the Muldoon years. The contention was that the NZSO was not a legitimate cost on the licence fee, which should be spent on matters to do strictly with broadcasting.¹⁰² Although the situation did not change until 1988, the broadcasters' rejection of the orchestra as a legitimate part of broadcasting was the most significant step yet taken in the rethinking of the purpose of broadcasting. It indicated the ending of the view that had prevailed since Shelley's time. Broadcasters were not the only ones to lose their appreciation of the orchestra. Other interests, especially Maori, opposed such a large portion of funding going to the NZSO. The orchestra came to be portrayed not so much as part of the country's cultural heritage but as an entrenched and partisan advocate for one version of culture which prevented any equitable division of the available funding.

MAORI BROADCASTING

During the BCNZ years calls for Maori broadcasting grew considerably, reflecting a general resurgence of Maori culture and an increasing desire for equitable treatment of the indigenous population. Change took place within broadcasting, as elsewhere in society, but it came slowly amid considerable reluctance to acknowledge the need for a new approach.

Like the NZBC, the Broadcasting Council showed a lack of concern for Maori broadcasting. Its attitude was indicated in its actions towards the Maori Programme Advisory Committee which it had inherited from the NZBC. That corporation allowed the committee to meet only few times and under the council it did not meet at all. The members' terms expired in December 1975 and the council allowed the committee to disband without making formal moves to abolish it.¹⁰³ The act required the council and the corporations to operate radio and television stations 'for the whole of New Zealand', but against that trend, Labour's broadcasting policy, as detailed in the Adam committee's report, advocated the establishment of an Auckland-based Polynesian commercial radio station.

Although it became council, and especially RNZ, policy to establish such a station, and the council did work towards it, progress was not rapid.

In November 1975, at the time of National's election victory, the council said that the station could be commissioned by July or August the following year. It approved interim transmission facilities for Radio Polynesia at Henderson at a modest estimated cost of \$23,000 but this was subject to the new minister's approval. By the middle of 1976 the council considered it unlikely that Radio Polynesia would proceed and this became certain in August when the minister suggested to the BCNZ that there were matters of higher priority. In the light of this, the council's 1977-81 capital expenditure programme did not include provision for the station. This was over the dissenting voice of Downey, the RNZ chairman, who was irked that any blame would fall on his corporation, which had resolved to establish the station and had made public its commitment.¹⁰⁴

In November 1976 the New Zealand Maori Council made submissions to the parliamentary select committee considering the Broadcasting Act. It was scathing about the treatment of Maori and Pacific Islanders by the broadcasting corporations, arguing that not even five minutes a week of regular television time were devoted to Maori or Pacific Island concerns. The only thing Polynesian about South Pacific Television, the council contended, was the occasional Maori motif of a taurapa (sternpiece of a canoe). On radio, Maori broadcasts totalled 55 minutes a week from Wellington and 50 minutes from Auckland. These the council saw as tokenism and the 20-minute weekly programme on Pacific Island music as 'tokenism of the worst kind'. The Maori council had been elated by the Adam committee's recommendation that a Maori and Polynesian radio station be started in Auckland, only to see their hopes dashed. Now it submitted that the moratorium on plans for the station be lifted immediately; there must also be greater attention to matters Maori and there should be more appointments of Maori broadcasters.¹⁰⁵ These submissions had no discernible effect on the 1976 act.

On 16 September 1977 Cross, Collins and Downey met a deputation from Te Reo Maori, led by its president, T. Kruger, and supported by Professors Hirini Mead and Whatarangi Winiata along with S. Wilson and Witi Ihimaera. The meeting pointed to a general and growing Maori discontent with broadcasting's, and especially television's, efforts for both the Maori people and the Maori language. It was also indicative of a rising desire for the widespread acceptance and use of the Maori language which was expressed the following decade in the 1987 Maori Language Act, designating Maori as one of New Zealand's two official languages. The deputation members sought the establishment of a Maori production unit within the television services and the production of television programmes in Maori. Along with more Maori content in locally produced television programmes, they wanted a five-minute nightly Maori news programme on television somewhere in the 6 to 8.30pm prime-time slot. They also wanted all broadcasting staff to take a compulsory course in correct Maori

pronunciation and to be subject to continual corrective measures. Cross undertook to refer the matter to the board.¹⁰⁶

Winiata later made a further submission that as a first objective, by 1985 0.5 per cent of all radio and television broadcasts be in Maori. The National Programme quickly argued that it already exceeded this mark, with 0.9 per cent of its programmes or 1.2 per cent of its 6am to midnight transmissions in Maori. In fact this reply conveniently confused Maori programming with Maori language programming. At the time, August 1979, RNZ's Maori and Pacific Island programming consisted of *Te Puna Wai Korero*, a 20-minute Saturday morning programme in English about Maori life, *Tangata Atu Motu o Te Moana Nui a Kiwa*, a half-hour Saturday early evening Pacific newsletter in English, and *He Rerenga Korero*, a half-hour magazine programme in English broadcast on Wednesday evenings. Programmes in Maori were *Te Reo o Te Pipiharauroa*, which was broadcast on Sundays and followed by the Maori news, giving 30 minutes of Maori language programming. On weekdays there was a five-minute news in Maori in the early morning and a Maori and Pacific Island news and magazine programme for 20 minutes every evening in Maori and the various languages of the Pacific. As well, various of the community stations broadcast their own Maori and Pacific Island news and magazine programmes.

Cross, like his minister, was opposed to a separate station for either Maori or Polynesians generally: 'I don't believe in a separate radio station for Polynesians. I don't think they belong in any form of communication ghetto'.¹⁰⁷ But both he and the minister supported a new initiative, which was RNZ's Maori and Pacific Islands unit, *Te Reo o Aotearoa*, opened at Papatoetoe in October 1978 with Haare Williams as manager. In opening the unit, Templeton stated the new unit was better than a Radio Polynesia in Auckland which would have been too limited.

TVNZ's ambivalent attitude to Maori programming was clear in 1980 with the March opening of the programme *Koha*, produced by Ray Waru. Its budget was relatively large and its production standards correspondingly high, but its scheduling was at 4pm on Sundays which, as Marcia Russell noted, was 'a time honoured slot for a "minority interest" programme'.¹⁰⁸ Although they were starting to fund Maori-oriented programming relatively generously, broadcasters did not accept that the results would be of interest to a large audience and were reluctant to test the matter by scheduling *Koha* at anything approaching peak viewing times.

In 1982 Ian Shearer, the minister, accused the BCNZ of not doing enough to reflect 'the new resurgence in Maoritanga'. He would like parallel half-hour news programmes in English and Maori on TV1 and TV2 every weeknight. Cross made no public reply but told the minister that a half-hour Maori news service on television was beyond the resources of the BCNZ.¹⁰⁹ The minister's support for Maori television programming bore some fruit the following year, however, when the BCNZ began a five-

minute Maori language news bulletin, soon titled *Te Karere*. The minister continued his advocacy — ‘I’ve made it quite clear I welcome the opportunity to have it [the five-minute programme] progressively increased’.¹¹⁰ *Te Karere* appeared on TV2 on weekdays at 5.55pm. In the Maori-speaking East Coast, which did not receive TV2, the programme was transmitted on TV1. Initially the programme was produced and presented by Derek Fox, an experienced television journalist and one of the few Maori then involved in broadcasting journalism. His career had been one of a growing commitment to Maori language broadcasting and he had become one of its strongest advocates. This success spurred him to further efforts.

In 1983 RNZ revived and greatly revised plans for Radio Polynesia. These followed 1YB in Auckland becoming an ethnic/access station. When the board first heard of the proposal, it deferred it, saying that it was not the right time to consider further non-commercial services. Further revision saw the proposal being for a station similar to 2YB, an AM station carrying *Sports Roundup*, Parliament, education, access and community programmes along with Maori and Polynesian scheduling.¹¹¹

Again haste was made slowly with Radio Polynesia and the first Maori language radio station was heard in Wellington, even though only for a short time. In August 1983 Radio Active, the Victoria University student station, was handed over entirely for five days to Nga Kaiwhakapumau i Te Reo, an organisation with representatives from tribes in the Wellington area, and Te Reo o Poneke went to air. One commentator argued that the station ‘destroyed for ever the idea that Maori and Pakeha broadcasting can somehow be integrated on the same radio stations . . . A Maori radio station run by Maori, for Maori and in the Maori language is a distinctive and unique sound. To my way of thinking, it could be a national treasure.’¹¹²

In a call for more Maori language broadcasts, Haare Williams noted, ‘We are not just another minority group.’¹¹³ The indigenous people of New Zealand have a language and culture that exist only in New Zealand and these must be accepted and nurtured. As the most widespread form of public verbal communication in New Zealand, broadcasting has a duty to play a prominent role in that process. The argument for Maori broadcasting is not just about programming: it is an argument for a changed understanding of what it is to be a New Zealander. Government-appointed broadcasters from the NZBS to the BCNZ gave expression to and indeed helped to create and maintain the unity of the nation. They acknowledged different interests of age, gender and race, but only within the accepted broadcasting categories of nationhood — that New Zealanders are one people. They could not cope when the country’s most substantial minority contended that broadcasting not only failed to cater to Maori interests and needs but indeed was harmful to them.

MEDIA WOMEN

Maori were not the only group to attack New Zealand broadcasting. A wide-ranging attack on broadcasting practices was coming from within a strong and resurgent feminist movement and especially from Media Women, a pressure group begun in the 1970s and at its most influential the following decade. In the words of Mary Varnham, 'it was born in the crucible of the feminist movement' and coalesced after the consciousness-raising of the 1970s when the emphasis shifted to social change. The catalyst was the 1979 United Women's Convention where the female journalists involved, themselves keen to advance towards equality in their profession, found themselves at odds with the call from many of their feminist colleagues to exclude male journalists from the conference and thus from reporting its proceedings. This led a number of female journalists to begin an organisation that would seriously address feminist issues in the media. The membership was particularly strong among the female employees of Radio New Zealand and at Avalon. Although the print media were not excluded, broadcasting was their major target.¹¹⁴

Broadcasting had made some progress in its treatment of women. Changes like SPTV's appointment of Jenny Goodwin as a newsreader registered steps towards gender equality, but such steps were small and were taken by a broadcasting establishment more notable for denigrating women's abilities. When Waldo Maguire arrived in 1965, he was surprised to find only seven of the more than 40 strong NZBC head office newsroom staff were female and that throughout the country there were just two female reporters on the NZBC's entire news staff.¹¹⁵ The non-acceptance of women was not peculiar to the newsroom. When, in 1966, Pamela Graham applied for a job as a camera operator, she was told the equipment was far too heavy and that it was not a job for a woman. It was another 18 years before she finally entered broadcasting in 1984 as a presentation assistant, working alongside a technical director.

The non-acceptance was long-standing. There were female employees in traditionally male positions but they were the exceptions. When Relda Familton was appointed as a technician in 1961, her new colleagues found this so strange they gave her a male name and dubbed her Fred. There was clear prejudice against women. In NZBS days the file of the very able announcer Grace Green included the notation, 'Only her sex prevents her swift promotion to executive status.'¹¹⁶ The situation continued into the 1970s. Among others, Marcia Russell, assistant producer on *News at Ten*, who went from print journalism to broadcasting when she joined the newly formed SPTV, was struck by the general sexism within television. She considered her fate, along with that of other female staff, was to be treated either as 'a bimbo or a workhorse'. She pointed in particular to the women employed as technical producers' assistants. Russell regarded them

as actually in charge of production but, as in the past, they were effectively barred from promotion to full producer or higher status.¹¹⁷

Media Women was the first group to apply concerted pressure to the broadcasting authorities. Its initial concern was with gender equality in broadcasting employment,¹¹⁸ but it soon broadened that focus to include negative images of women portrayed in the media, and the absence of portrayals of women. They made submissions to TVNZ using the act's requirement for balance (now far from the original intention to balance two conflicting political parties) as a justification, but as Varnham notes, 'We got absolutely nowhere.' In no sense were the broadcasting organisations ready to lead a new recognition of either employment equality or the media portrayal of women. The 1970s was, however, the decade in which changes began, forced by a rising feminism that altered society in general. Broadcasting slowly recognised the new order.

1981 SPRINGBOK TOUR

Rather than expressing a national unity, broadcasting was seen as clinging to an outmoded understanding of New Zealand society rather than, as its critics wanted, leading the charge to change the country. Many broadcasters felt caught in the midst of wider social conflict, doomed to offend all sides. The predicament was at its most public in the winter of 1981 when New Zealand was split over the issue of a rugby tour by South Africa's Springboks.

The dominant reaction among New Zealanders had long been to ignore, often to be ignorant of, the apartheid system in South Africa, a country for which rugby was as central as it was for New Zealand. Instead, they staunchly claimed the right to play an innocent game with any opponent, in other words, to keep politics out of sport. New Zealand continued its rugby contacts with South Africa to the extent of ostracism, provoking a boycott of the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games by its presence. Within New Zealand, opposition to sporting contact with South Africa grew and the 1981 tour was the brutal climax. Views were passionate and cut across families, friendships, workplaces and associations.

Broadcasting staff asked whether they should be involved. Should the corporation report the tour at all? If it did, should it merely report the news and refuse to cover the actual matches? If matches were filmed should they be withheld from South Africa? With the support of the PSA, the issue was taken to the broadcasting membership for a vote. The fact that broadcasters could even discuss whether or not to cover the tour showed the depth of feeling. The broadcasting heads made their position clear: Ian Cross was unreservedly for reporting the tour. Broadcasting staff met in various centres but the most important gathering, and the one that decided the issue, took place at Avalon. After what the PSA representative



Hamilton's Rugby Park at the cancelled 1981 Springbok match. NZMA

later described as 'the most intelligent and insightful debate in the country on the topic that long winter', the staff recorded a solid majority for broadcasting and reported the tour, filmed the sporting events and performed all the tasks required by their profession.¹¹⁹ Failure to cover the tour would have usurped the right of the censor and deprived the country of a record of that traumatic season. It would also have prevented New Zealanders from confronting the matter, and growing in understanding as a result. The telecasts were also of considerable significance in South Africa; the live broadcast of the Hamilton match cancellation gave a salutary indication of the depth of feeling against the South African presence. Many broadcasts of the 1981 tour have considerable power and stature in their own right. The final test at Eden Park in particular, with its images of barbed wire, of police clashing with anti-tour demonstrators, of rugby played as flour bombs were dropped from a circling light aircraft, provided one of the most memorable telecasts in the country's history and an extraordinary record of the year in which rugby ceased to be a measure of New Zealand's unity and became the focus of its divisiveness.

It is difficult to single out one individual in the breadth of the 1981 tour coverage but the corporation's senior rugby commentator, Keith Quinn, deserves particular mention. His obvious love for the game of rugby combined with a journalistic appreciation of the trauma the nation was undergoing to give a series of commentaries that faithfully depicted the many-sided reactions to the tour. Quinn had joined the NZBC sports section in 1967 and rose to prominence during the 1972 Olympics in Munich with its massacre of Israeli athletes. Yet again the NZBC had neglected to send news reporters to the games, but the competent New Zealand reporting of the tragedy, done principally by Quinn, showed that sports reporters were as able as their news colleagues. The 1972 Olympics had advanced his own career, but it was during 1981 that Quinn performed his greatest service to journalism and to his country.

One aftermath of broadcasters' role in the tour was the forced use of their film material in later court cases. The corporation which, in Sceats's day, could quietly protest and have such requests rescinded, now found that option unavailable. When 25 protesters had their deposition hearings in the Auckland District Court, the BCNZ was required to produce all its television material taken in the vicinity of Eden Park on 12 September 1981, the day of the last test. The corporation protested, to no avail, that it was a news gatherer and disseminator rather than evidence provider. At first television news staff refused to tell their management where the film could be found. They relented on this point but the PSA then banned any handling of it. Eventually the TVNZ management gathered the material and put it on videotape for the court.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Not the least of the consequences for New Zealand broadcasting from the heated year of 1981 was the resignation of Neil Roberts from TVNZ. Roberts was a newspaper journalist who joined Radio New Zealand in 1975 and the following year became SPTV's parliamentary reporter. From 1977 to 1981 he worked on the current affairs programme *Eyewitness*. His resignation came during the election campaign of 1981 after Prime Minister Muldoon gained an apology from TVNZ for a programme Roberts had made comparing the minister of education unfavourably with his Labour Party counterpart. Roberts's response to what he saw as betrayal from his employers was to resign and start Communicado Communications which, by the end of the decade, was New Zealand's most successful private video production house. Initially Communicado made advertisements and corporate videos but the goal was to include regular television production. That was reached in the mid-1980s with the success of the company's *That's Fairly Interesting*, a series popular enough in New Zealand to be screened against *The Cosby Show* and to outrate that internationally successful import. Along with advancing his own company, Roberts regarded *That's Fairly Interesting* as a vehicle to improve the self-image of his fellow Kiwis. 'I devised it as an antidote to all the bad news New Zealanders get on television. Unlike America where people see themselves in comedies, in self-affirming dramas, even in soap operas, New Zealanders only see themselves in the news and current affairs.'¹

Roberts, like many broadcasters, had a vision for his craft that went beyond economic considerations. During the 1980s he and the other independent producers witnessed a changing broadcasting environment in which it began to be regarded as sensible, both culturally and financially, to separate programme production from programme transmission. They saw themselves as part of that new order and looked forward to a day when programme-making was less the preserve of TVNZ and fully open to independent producers. A major part of the change was an increasing support for private broadcasting; with more than the single corporation purchaser, independent producers would have a greater opportunity to flourish. The 1980s saw their wishes met beyond their expectations. Private broadcasting was

accepted again. Although it increased sparingly during the Muldoon era, the experience of those years was a prelude to a bipartisan understanding in which, by the end of the decade, private commercial control was triumphant politically as the preferred style for all broadcasting.

BROADCASTING TRIBUNAL

Norman Kirk's Labour government had acknowledged political necessity and accepted the existing private stations but allowed no addition to their number, thus continuing its predecessors' refusal of private enterprise. National's reversal of that policy was expressed in the 1976 act by creating a Broadcasting Tribunal whose principal task was to adjudicate on applications to start private broadcasting stations. The result was both new growth in private radio broadcasting and a new regime in which private broadcasters and the BCNZ were required to surrender much of their autonomy to a tribunal that determined the number, location and transmitting strength of stations, along with their permissible commercial and non-commercial activity, and attempted to define their ownership structures and the nature of their broadcasting formats. But the tribunal's relationship with broadcasters was doomed to create rancour.

The Broadcasting Tribunal chairman, Bruce Slane, was appointed for three years from January 1977 but, with reappointments, chaired the tribunal until its abolition in 1989. Slane was a member of the council of the New Zealand Law Society and editor of the Auckland District Law Society's newsletter. A regular broadcaster on legal matters, he was also a longtime columnist for the *Auckland Star* and a radio talkback host on 1ZB's *Hotline*. His colleagues on the tribunal were Janet Somerville of Dunedin, who was appointed for two years, and Lionel Sceats, ex-NZBC director-general, who was appointed for one year. Again reappointments extended their terms. Somerville was replaced from November 1982 by Ann Wilson and Sceats from November 1984 by Robert Boyd-Bell.

The tribunal was not allowed to issue warrants for television stations other than the corporation's TV1 and TV2 until permitted to do so by the minister. Permission was not given during the term of the Muldoon government and the tribunal did not call for television applications until 1985. During its first eight years, therefore, the tribunal's attention concerning broadcasting warrants focused on radio. Here, too, its powers were restricted. The tribunal had to have regard for government policy and to comply with any written directions from the minister. In the tribunal's first month Templeton made that policy clear regarding FM radio: it was 'not desirable for applications to establish FM broadcasting stations to be approved at this stage'. Slane demurred to the extent of suggesting the minister make the directive public, a suggestion that Templeton did follow, issuing a press statement.² There were technical problems to be overcome



Bruce Slane, Janet Somerville and Lionel Sceats at the first meeting of the Broadcasting Tribunal. *EVENING POST*

before FM could be introduced and costs and timings had to be determined to clear land mobile bands. But things moved slowly. The refusal of FM radio continued into the 1980s. There was another directive from Templeton in early 1980 deeming it contrary to government policy for FM applications to be considered for all of that year,³ and other ministerial directives informed the tribunal that government policy was 'broadly opposed to Sunday advertising' and to 'extensive liquor advertising on radio'.⁴

PRIVATE RADIO AND THE TRIBUNAL

All seven private commercial stations that pre-dated Labour's 1973 legislation began with financial difficulties; Radio Waikato successfully pleaded poverty as a reason for not establishing its promised repeater stations in Ngatea and Te Kuiti. Gradually all became profitable and in the 1975/76 financial year showed a combined 15 per cent return on their total share capital of \$1.5 million. The reason, of course, was their growing audience, 34 per cent of the national audience by the time the 1976 act came into force.

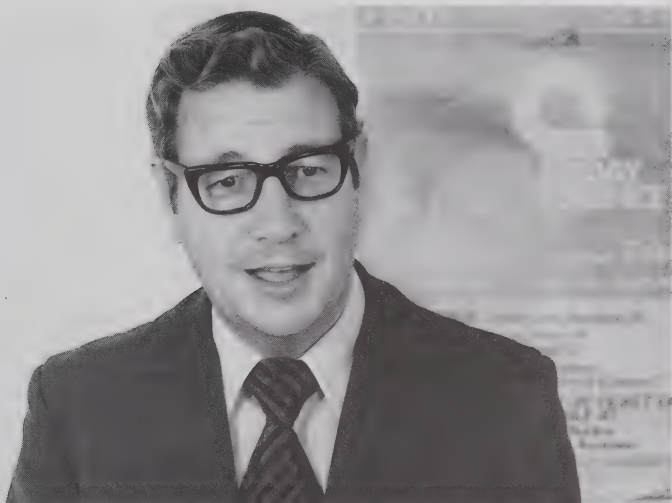
Along with their popular music format, the private stations reintroduced talkback radio which proved another successful means of enticing listeners back to radio. During the 1970s talkback became common on both private and RNZ stations. It began on Radio i with the opinionated Eccles Smith

and was soon followed elsewhere. The formats varied considerably. Some hosts, such as Gordon Dryden on Radio i and Brian Edwards on Radio Windy, ran three-hour programmes of almost solid talk. Others, such as Paddy O'Donnell of 2ZB, blended the talkback with news, music and other entertainment. Radio Windy's Erich Geiringer held an audience for a regular show that concentrated on medical topics. The best, such as Dryden, were highly popular and the Radio i audience more than doubled when his show began. There was no sense in which stations aimed for a consistency of views. Geoff Sinclair, the other regular talkback host on Radio i, was chosen for his very different opinions and approach. The hosts were given remarkable freedom of expression. This was well illustrated by Tim Bickerstaff, the knowledgeable and abrasive host of the *Sportslive* talkback on Radio i, when he advocated a 'Punch a Pom a Day' campaign after All Black Keith Murdoch was dismissed from the 1972-73 tour of Britain.

Talkback radio remained under the control of the station — the host chose the topic and could always silence a speaker — but it was a major new use of the medium and it quickly became accepted as an important avenue for both forming and expressing public opinion. Like their electorates, many politicians kept tuned to their local talkback show, ready to phone in their own views. Several politicians before, after and while they were in office, accepted positions as talkback hosts, adding a new dimension to the long political tradition of media involvement through writing regular newspaper columns.

The number of private stations grew when Gordon Dryden, the most persistent of the applicants, finally received a broadcasting licence in April 1978 for Auckland's third private station, Radio Manukau. It underwent a rapid name change to become Radio Pacific. Dryden's warrant was notable for the range of conditions attached to it, 11 in all. These included requirements that the station should be oriented to the multicultural needs of the racially diverse south Auckland population, that the main emphasis of the station's programmes should be informational and that recorded music should not form more than 10 per cent of the material broadcast. Shareholding, too, was specified. Along with the usual limitation of news company shareholding to 30 per cent, apart from the combined holding of full-time staff members and the Manukau Community Trust, no shareholder could directly or indirectly hold more than a 10 per cent shareholding. Dryden said the terms were basically those he had sought.

Although these conditions had largely been prefigured by the Radio Pacific proponents themselves rather than imposed by the tribunal, the understanding was they were 'tailored to meet the tribunal's likely requirements'.⁵ At a later Supreme Court hearing on the matter the conditions were converted into undertakings but remained terms of the warrant. Dryden's tailoring was perhaps over-indulgent for the tribunal was seldom as prescriptive again. But the trend was obvious: the tribunal set conditions



Gordon Dryden. NZMA

it required to be met regardless of future changes in circumstances. For Radio Pacific the tribunal was clear that 'it will not be permitted to change the warrant to permit a music station format'. As a general warning the tribunal stated, 'A warrant is not to be regarded as open for permanent use in any way which the warrant holder considered commercially suitable'.⁶

The warrant conditions placed on Radio Pacific, particularly the limitation of music playing to 10 per cent of transmission time, meant that the station could not approach its commercial rivals in the audience ratings. It concentrated on talkback programming which it broadcast to an overwhelmingly older adult audience. Ironically, its intended multiracial audience was predominantly young and not attracted by the station's programming. In the station's fourth year, Dryden acknowledged that 'We have almost literally no listeners in the teenage group'.⁷ Radio Pacific scored a mere 2 per cent of the audience in its first ratings' survey and over the next years languished towards the bottom of the Auckland ratings, generally between 1YA and 1YC.

The tribunal had no doubt that it needed to impose considerable discipline on all radio stations regarding such matters as transmission strength. It felt each station saw the best use of the spectrum as being whatever would give it the greatest benefit in terms of power, field strength, audience reception and commercial return. The difficulties were most noticeable in the

country's largest city where an 'Auckland attitude' under-estimated the adverse effects that actions there might cause in the rest of New Zealand.⁸

The private stations, albeit grudgingly, accepted that such discipline was necessary. What they continually opposed was the tribunal's imposition of specifications over broadcasting content. Most applicants to the tribunal considered that the chairman, Bruce Slane, had his own vision for broadcasting and placed conditions on warrants which, while permitted by the act, were not required by it. What developed was a highly regulated system of broadcasting with warrants specifying not only who could broadcast where and when but also what could and could not be included in the broadcasts. The tribunal became an economic manipulator of the broadcasting market and a major influence on the industry.

The tribunal was a decidedly non-commercial body to impose on New Zealand commercial radio, whether corporation or private. Normal commercial activity does not require previous application and therefore public announcement of plans. Then, having received their warrants detailing the nature of permitted programming, both public and private broadcasters were bound by such specifications and locked into programming formats in an unstable and changing radio market. They could neither redress past decisions nor take advantage of changes in public taste.

A further problem was the sheer length of time the tribunal took to arrive at decisions: Ian Cross called it 'an inefficient tortoise' and most broadcasters agreed. Like the Broadcasting Authority, the tribunal, as a judicial body, considered itself bound to a complete recognition of due process, and applicants and objectors were ready to make full use of that. This meant considerable, even enormous, delays. Several times the tribunal itself objected to the length of proceedings. The 14 days of hearings for Gordon Dryden's Radio Pacific licence could have been considerably less had it not been for 'the length of evidence introduced by the applicant, much of which concerned Mr Dryden's personal political, economic and social philosophy and evidence of the social problems of Manukau City and the Auckland metropolitan area. In addition an unusually large number of exhibits of limited probative value were introduced to be read by the Tribunal. It may be an indication of the applicant's thoroughness but it led to extended questioning on marginal matters. Furthermore, a good deal of time was spent by some of the parties opposing the application in attempting to belittle Mr Dryden's past achievements and future potential.'⁹

Most delays in hearings came from objectors to applications. Existing broadcasters were advantaged by the legislation and the tribunal's manner of operation and they regularly succeeded in delaying the start and then the speed of hearings. Many hearings became bogged in seemingly endless litigation which culminated, towards the end of the tribunal's existence, in the 18-month marathon concluded in 1988 to decide who would get four regional television warrants.

Then there was the tribunal's approach to its work. Slane's desire to order New Zealand broadcasting required much knowledge of and research into programme formats, advertising patterns and audience profiles. This information was not only provided by applicants and objectors but scrutinised and often provided again by the tribunal itself. Intended as a warranting authority, the tribunal became a recorder and watchdog of the details of daily broadcasting. It did produce some fascinating specialised results, notably the work done by Professor G. J. Schmitt of the University of Waikato's School of Management, who was co-opted to the tribunal in its later years.¹⁰ But the tribunal was never staffed or funded to conduct or oversee such detailed research, a matter about which the chairman complained to no avail.¹¹ Indeed the decision to have the tribunal serviced by the Tribunals Division of the Department of Justice was made to avoid a permanent staff being appointed. The tribunal's inability to do promptly the tasks it set itself added considerably to the general slowness. Coupled with the litigious approach of applicants and especially objectors, the tribunal regime slowed rather than expedited the growth of private stations desired by the government.

In May 1978 the tribunal allowed the application of the Gospel Radio Fellowship to start Radio Rhema in Christchurch which began daily broadcasts on 11 November 1978. This was not the station's first broadcast, however: it broadcast for one day in 1974 and again from 24 December 1976 to 2 January 1977. But its 1978 warrant for permanent broadcasts meant the return to New Zealand, after an absence of over 40 years, of religious broadcasting other than that permitted under the public radio system. Not permitted to advertise, the Christian station followed the example of its predecessors and gained an income by opening a subscription membership. In 1982 a reported 10,000 subscribers were paying the annual \$24 subscription. Donations and gifts, including much voluntary labour, added to this income.

The predominantly music station had and still has a strong Christian message. Its aim is 'to bring you radio promoting that which is good and worthwhile in the community . . . presenting Christian and secular programming based on sound moral and ethical guide-lines'.¹² Lyrics are vetted and the lifestyles of musicians scrutinised. In 1982, for example, the station was reported as unwilling to air The Beatles, though it would play instrumental versions of their compositions.¹³ Radio Rhema wished to extend its coverage to other cities and had the asset backing to do so, but the tribunal did not allow its second station to begin until 7 March 1982 when Radio Rhema, relayed from Christchurch, began broadcasting in Wellington. A third station, again relayed from Christchurch, began in Nelson in June 1983.

There were further stations but the tribunal would not permit a widespread return of private broadcasting. As at August 1981, when the tri-

bunal handed in its report on FM broadcasting and attention turned to FM applications, there were a total of 16 private AM stations, including three repeater stations. Two, 4XD and Radio Rhema, were non-commercial. The rest were the seven pre-tribunal private commercial stations and Radio Pacific, plus Radio Otago, warranted in 1980, Invercargill's 4XF, owned by Foveaux Radio Ltd, and Palmerston North's 2XS, owned by Manawatu Radio Co Ltd. These two went to air in 1981.

Initially, in accordance with the tribunal's policy, the private stations were locally owned by numerous small shareholders. The exception was Radio Waikato with 30 per cent of its shares owned by newspaper interests. It made one of the first applications to the tribunal, testing its commitment to the earlier decision that newspaper shareholding in radio stations be limited. Early in 1977 Radio Waikato, transmitting from 1XW, applied to have Independent Publishers Ltd raise its shareholding from the permitted 30 per cent to 45 per cent. The firm was a subsidiary of Independent Newspapers Ltd, the major shareholder in, among other newspapers, the *Waikato Times*. The application was opposed by the BCNZ and the private stations Radio Hauraki and Radio Avon. Declining it, the tribunal deemed it 'undesirable that the proprietors of the one local daily newspaper should have a controlling interest in the shareholding of the only private radio station'. Thirty per cent continued to be the limit to newspaper shareholding and also became the limit for cross-shareholding when, in 1978, Radio Hauraki gained permission to acquire a 30 per cent holding in Capital City Radio Ltd, the proprietors of Radio Windy.¹⁴

Although the tribunal could limit the ownership of private stations by other media organisations, it could not ensure the continuation of its policy for local ownership by many shareholders. The change was first felt at Radio Hauraki, where a nominee company built up a shareholding, resulting in a change of control of the station. David Gapes, managing director from the time the station gained its licence, was ousted in September 1977, lamenting that 'The money men took over and the radio men got squeezed out'.¹⁵ Gapes's departure did not mean the end of all the Hauraki originals: Derek Lowe applied for and won the position as the station's general manager. His return was the start of most profitable years for the station and Hauraki further consolidated private station ownership, confounding the intentions of the tribunal, by taking its holding in Radio Windy along with a 25 per cent shareholding in its Auckland rival, Radio i. The full degree of private station consolidation was unknown because nominee shareholding meant that accurate information about ownership patterns was simply unavailable. The general pattern was for publicly acknowledged cross-ownership to grow to the levels accepted by the tribunal but there were strong suspicions that these were well exceeded. In 1982, for example, the *Listener* suggested that two men effectively controlled all North Island private radio interests, with the exception of Radio Pacific.¹⁶

The tribunal continued a policy practised by the broadcasting council, under the strong influence of RNZ, that the private stations should remain not only locally owned and controlled but also locally focused. The policy had been evident since 1975 when Radio i applied to link with other private stations to broadcast a commentary on a race between the two great middle-distance runners, John Walker and Filbert Bayi. The application was declined, with RNZ arguing that it was broadcasting all the events at the athletic meeting concerned and Radio i's application to broadcast only one race was 'skimming off the cream'. RNZ's anxiety ran deeper than this: Downey, RNZ's chairman, feared that if the private stations were allowed to network, their identity as local stations would change. They would emerge as full-scale national competitors to RNZ but without RNZ's financially handicapping requirement to also broadcast in the less populated and therefore non-profitable areas.¹⁷

The council did what it could to hinder private radio. Radio Avon was denied use of the council's Auckland-Christchurch microwave link. Applications from Radio Windy and Radio Hauraki to advertise on television were turned down, as were their complaints against this decision. Personalities from private stations were not allowed to appear on television commercials, though their voices could be used. This was decided, with the dissent of Cole Catley and Ford, when Radio Windy's Brian Edwards was to appear on a commercial. Gordon Dryden, a regular on TV2, was prohibited from appearing there while his radio warrant application was before the tribunal so as not to influence public opinion in his favour.¹⁸

The BCNZ chairmen, Jarden and then Cross, had little antagonism to private radio but RNZ's opposition was unrelenting. While Jarden was chairman, Radio Windy applied for a daily feed of BBC news from the Quartz Hill shortwave station. Radio Windy was already receiving the service, by cable at an annual cost of \$8,700, and Jarden saw no problem with giving it the same material from Quartz Hill at a slightly lesser cost, thus profiting both the council and the station. The application was denied: RNZ did not want to assist a competitor and warrants were granted on the basis of private stations receiving no help from the public broadcasting system.¹⁹

Cross also found himself at odds with RNZ; he regarded it as ready to appeal and take all legal options to stop private radio. Reared in the newspaper and private enterprise world, Cross had a high regard for competition which he saw as spurring new ideas. He arrived at work one morning, while RNZ was fighting one small, private, would-be Wellington station, to see the single word CHOICE graffitied in huge letters on the building. 'I was in favour of choice,' said Cross. 'Radio New Zealand were the real conservatives who hated the idea of any alternative service.'²⁰

The obstacle of greatest concern to the private stations was refusal of permission for them to network — to share programmes and services

among themselves. There were times when the private stations took little notice of the ban on networking. In October 1976 Radio Windy was refused permission to network with other private stations a talkback discussion on the broadcasting bill then before Parliament, but the private stations went ahead with the broadcast. It emanated from Radio Windy and was played elsewhere with a 10-second delay. The private stations claimed that because the broadcast was not simultaneous it was not networking. The council, firmly of the view that its ruling had been deliberately breached, advised the minister and asked for a review of the provisions.²¹ In a pro-private broadcasting government no action was taken. Such examples, however, were the exceptions. In their day-to-day broadcasting, the private stations were forced to accept that networking was unavailable.

Although, unlike the 1973 legislation, the 1976 act allowed networking, in practice the tribunal allowed it only if separate applications were made and permission was granted for each broadcast. Private stations saw this as little advance on Labour's blanket denial. Trevor Egerton, chairman of the FICB, argued their 'great and continuing frustration' was the inability to network. 'We can't feed racing commentaries through a private station network, we can't use a professional newsreader for a national news service, we can't network international news or sports events.'²² The frustration was exacerbated by the 1976 act's opening of the door to new private stations: the existing private stations feared their ascendancy would be brief if they were still unable to do more than compete as individual stations.

The major effect of the prohibition on networking was on the private stations' news broadcasts: only co-operation could make these cost effective and of acceptable quality. Although the ban did not apply to co-operation in news gathering, the private stations added to their news difficulties with their reluctance to spend enough to give themselves, collectively or individually, adequate news services. The first of the private stations, Radio Hauraki, which began with an emphasis on news, was the first to show its reluctance to continue such a concentration when, at the end of 1976, it fired four of its senior journalists and pruned its news service well back from its previous costs of \$150,000 per year. Such pruning continued and was the major factor in the station's increased profits. In 1980 the tribunal voiced its concern about Radio Hauraki shedding more of its news staff and news broadcasts. In the circumstances, there was a temptation to steal rather than gather news. When Wilson & Horton made various charges of piracy against Radio Hauraki, Derek Lowe acknowledged the concerns.²³

The notable exception among the private stations to the general reluctance to fund news services was Radio Avon. When the station began it quickly won a large following and, for much of 1976, 1977 and 1978, held over 50 per cent of the available audience before a resurgent 3ZB regained many of its lost listeners. On the financial basis of that large market share and under the leadership of Paul Mortlock, Radio Avon moved

strongly into the news arena. Much of Radio Avon's success came from its fervently parochial attitude. This continued with its news which was oriented particularly to its local area; in 1980 14 of its 17 journalists were Christchurch based. The other three were in Wellington where Radio Avon started a parliamentary bureau.

The tribunal considered that the private stations were and should remain local. This belief was clear in a June 1980 decision, when it considered and only partially allowed an application from the owners of Radio Hauraki, Radio i, Bay of Plenty Radio, Radio Waikato, Radio Windy and Radio Otago to network their programmes. 'We consider it is in the interest of broadcasting that the existing philosophy should be continued, namely that the Radio New Zealand stations should provide network services and the private stations should maintain their local or regional character and should not be seduced into extensive networking by possible cost saving or revenue inducing factors. At the same time we should not wish to stultify the initiative and enterprise such stations show...It would therefore be the wish of the Tribunal to permit sporadic use of networking for entertainment purposes.'²⁴

But in a notable change, also in June 1980, the tribunal reversed its earlier decisions and finally allowed the private stations to network their news bulletins.²⁵ Again Radio Avon was the leader, extending its news system into a network among the private stations. With the tribunal ban no longer an issue, other problems surfaced. Radio Avon had difficulty in persuading other stations to join with it in its news service. Eventually the parliamentary bureau was supported by the other private stations but faced continuing unwillingness to maintain their commitment. Radio Hauraki did not join the Radio Avon network until August 1983 and on doing so was strongly criticised by the Northern Journalists' Union for substantially reducing its number of journalists and its amount of locally produced news. In 1984 the president of the New Zealand Journalists' Union complained to the tribunal that the private stations' news network had never been satisfactory, partly because of stations' reluctance to employ sufficient journalists but equally so because stations were loath to give their news stories to the network, thus disclosing them to their local competitors.²⁶

RNZ did all it could to thwart private station networking. It made regular representations to the BCNZ on the matter and in August 1983 the corporation resolved to oppose any further networking by private stations by formally objecting to applications to the tribunal to extend such networks. At the same time it developed a more realistic long-term policy of accepting and competing with the private commercial stations. Because RNZ stations had news sources and the considerable networking advantages denied to their private counterparts, they competed with increasing success. As director-general, Whitehead took his commercial stations back into profit by following the example set by his competitors. The momentum was regularly

lost and each region learnt the lessons anew when competition arrived. In Hamilton 1ZH took five years to recover from the entry of private competition. In 1983 Invercargill's 4ZA lost ground when it first faced competition and Whitehead acknowledged that the lesson learnt in Hamilton had been forgotten. When Wakem became director-general the board discussed with her the poor performance of Palmerston North's 2ZA. She acknowledged what was becoming a pattern for RNZ: it took five years for a station to recover from the advent of local competition from a private operator and return to real growth. Station 2ZA, she felt, was just entering its recovery phase. RNZ made expensive mistakes, notable among them the 1977 change in Christchurch to 3ZM which, in response to the rise of Radio Avon, became a 'beautiful music station' called Radio Nova. Under this format 3ZM halved its audience share before, late in 1978, the change was reversed. In line with its Auckland and Wellington counterparts, 3ZM reverted to a rock music format oriented to a young audience. As the lessons were learnt and changes were made, the RNZ commercial stations became more and more like their private competitors. RNZ's original desire not to employ personnel who had worked for private stations soon faded and there was an increasing movement of staff between the two. In Christchurch, for example, the prominent broadcaster Ken Ellis moved from Radio Avon, where he had been programme director, to 3ZM and became a major part of that station's climb back up the audience ratings. No longer did the great divide lie between the corporation and the private world; there were as many distinctions among the private stations as between them and their RNZ commercial counterparts.²⁷

SHORT-TERM WARRANTS

The tribunal gave a number of short-term broadcasting authorisations, a feature it regarded as 'probably unique' to New Zealand.²⁸ Because the warrants were for short and predetermined lengths of time, the tribunal relaxed its application requirements and adjudication procedures, making it easier to obtain permission to broadcast. Such warrants were for various purposes. Many were consequences of the warranting system itself and were issued to the BCNZ and existing private stations as they followed the established practice of broadcasting from holiday locations over Christmas and January.

Some of the short-term stations, such as Radio Horowhenua, gained a permanent life. Its story also indicates a change in RNZ's attitudes to private radio. Radio began on the Kapiti Coast as a series of short-term summer broadcasting warrants. Linked in its first summer with Radio Windy, in 1982 it reached an agreement with RNZ's commercial network and applied to the tribunal for a permanent Radio Horowhenua. The application was granted in 1987. RNZ took a holding, originally 15 per cent, in

the station, which was given on the same basis as RNZ's own stations, news and specialist programmes along with the all-night programme.²⁹

STUDENT RADIO

The short-term authorisations allowed a distinctive innovation, student radio, which forsook the styles of both the commercial stations and the public broadcasters. The stations were intended to provide a news and information service for students, and much of their programming centred on university, and especially student, interests. More of it was effectively a form of access radio, with the broadcasting time used by different community groups. But, as had always been general in radio broadcasting, the student stations mainly played music and here their orientation was new. They offered a wider range of musical styles than was available on other stations, from classical to 'music to shrivel snails', the title of a late-night session in Auckland. But, in particular, they brought a harder edged understanding of the same youth culture on which the majority of the fully commercial stations concentrated. Student radio introduced a true alternative.

Student radio began in 1969 when a pirate university station entitled Radio Bosom transmitted from somewhere on Auckland's Waitemata Harbour. It was a brief three-day life which, in 1972, was rekindled with further illegal transmissions after an application for a 10-day warrant during a university arts festival was declined. This time the station called itself Radio Underground. Legal transmissions began in 1974 when Radio Bosom gained the first student radio warrant, allowing it to broadcast during the university's orientation week. In 1980 Radio Bosom changed its name to Radio B. Student radio expanded to other campuses as new stations received short-term authorisations allowing them to transmit in such times as orientation and capping weeks. When they got permission for longer periods of broadcasting it was not full-time and the stations closed for the summer when the students were away from their studies. Nor were the stations permitted, originally, to broadcast for more than a few hours in the evenings.

Student radio began with little of the professionalism of the corporation or other private radio stations. Much of the equipment, especially in the early months and years, was rudimentary and the programming was often regarded as self-indulgent, with the young announcers and other workers unwilling to conform to the discipline of other stations. Records would be replayed as often as an individual announcer wished and programme times were at best elastic. Despite, or perhaps because of, this approach the stations struck a responsive chord and quickly gained popularity and an audience not only among students but also more widely, especially, but not entirely, among the young. Along with a concentration on alternative, or non-mainstream, music the student stations became



The mast is raised at Victoria University's Radio Active. *DOMINION*

noted for their championing of New Zealand-produced records. This was of great consequence to the record-makers; Roger Shepherd of Christchurch's Flying Nun Records noted, 'Sales of our records plummet when student radio goes off the air.'³⁰ The student stations had a general commitment to 20 per cent New Zealand content, well in excess of other stations. In 1984 the Auckland student station, by then named Campus Radio, increased the New Zealand content to 25 per cent as a result of the popularity of its *New Kiwi Music Show*.

Most of the stations gained some financial backing from their local students' associations but they were also allowed limited advertising. As of early 1982, when six student stations were broadcasting, four were allowed four minutes advertising per hour, as opposed to the 18 minutes per hour limit for other commercial stations. One of the other two, the University of Waikato's Radio Contact, was new to air and later gained the same right. At that time only Auckland's Campus Radio was funded entirely from advertising.

Student radio started small but its proponents soon developed larger ambitions as expertise, both at the microphone and in station management, grew. Victoria University's Radio Active appointed a full-time manager in 1984, a first for student radio, albeit on an honorarium absurdly low in comparison with other stations' salaries. Increased broadcasting

time was applied for and the eventual trend was to full-time broadcasting. But here the tribunal became the significant brake on the development of student radio, slowing the change to FM and forcing the stations to stay within their short-term formats. Radio B became Campus Radio in 1982 when it became the first of the student stations to effectively broadcast all year. This, however, was not under a full-time warrant and the station experienced the farcical situation of ceasing transmissions for some days at the start and end of the university year as it moved between longer and short-term warrants.

Initially the other stations regarded student radio with affection. It was not commercial, it had distinct playing formats and it did not compete with other stations, commercial or non-commercial. The private commercial stations in particular had a great deal to thank the student stations for: they acted very much as a training ground, with many student volunteers graduating to employment in the full range of commercial radio. But the relationship became strained as the student stations began advertising and as their broadcasting hours and audience size increased. By the mid-1980s RNZ was reviewing its attitude to the student stations. Wakem argued to her board that the time was ripe to raise the matter with the tribunal.³¹

ACCESS RADIO

Access radio is the name given to broadcasts that are made and controlled by community groups rather than broadcasters. It has a long history in New Zealand and many stations have given broadcasting time to members of their local communities. As a regular broadcasting feature it began on 5 April 1981 when the Cook Islands New Zealand Society broadcast over RNZ's Wellington station, 2YB. This followed a 1980 tribunal decision that allowed RNZ to use 2YB for access radio to a maximum of 120 hours a month. RNZ scheduled three hours a day, 9am to noon, as access time. It provided technical guidance and allocated the hours among the groups requesting time but was not involved in the content of programmes. Many ethnic groups broadcast over 2YB, as did a large number of special interest organisations, from the Women's Resource Centre to four-wheel drive clubs. RNZ was reluctant to give time to those groups who traditionally received media coverage and concentrated on those that had been excluded. In the religious area, for example, the larger denominations were excluded from access radio while minority religions, such as the Baha'is, were allowed to broadcast.

COMPLAINTS

Along with the issuing of broadcasting warrants, the tribunal's other major task was to adjudicate on complaints about broadcasters. This was an

extension of a process started by Labour in its 1973 act which required the council to receive and adjudicate upon complaints about broadcasts from any of the corporations. A four-person complaints review committee was instituted. Cole Catley and Ford from the council were joined by C. G. Pottinger, a Wellington lawyer, and Harold Innes, an Auckland businessman. The committee's first hearing concerned a 4 August 1975 broadcast by Dr Keith Ovenden on TV1's programme *Tonight at Nine*. The complaint was upheld and the council directed the corporation to report the decision in a programme. This verdict was complied with, though over the objection that the council was asking a corporation to broadcast a news item.³²

There were few complaints, something the council attributed to the wording of the act, which it saw as too restrictive. Complaints were permitted only 'from any person who considers himself to have been treated unjustly or unfairly'. The council thought the grounds for complaints should be enlarged to include such matters as the breaking of council rules and complaints against programme standards.³³

National's Cabinet Committee on Broadcasting, when considering the 1976 act, also felt the grounds for complaint should be expanded, particularly to allow complaints to be made in the public interest. It also thought decisions about complaints should not reside totally with broadcasters and a major innovation in the 1976 legislation was its formal complaints procedure.³⁴ The Broadcasting Tribunal was made the appeal authority for complaints about broadcasts. Complaints concerning BCNZ programmes had to be addressed first to the corporation and then, if the complainant were not satisfied, to the tribunal. Complaints about a private station were heard by a committee of private broadcasters; again complainants had a right of appeal to the tribunal. The minister, however, could complain directly to the tribunal about any programme broadcast or about to be broadcast that he considered infringed the standards prescribed in the act. The minister also had the power to refer a programme intended for broadcast to the tribunal. In such cases the programme could not be broadcast without a decision from the tribunal. Hugh Rennie, a later BCNZ chairman, described this provision as 'totalitarian' and commented, 'Any attempt to control newspapers in this way would be so strikingly repugnant to the traditions of the press as to be beyond any government's imagination.'³⁵ The outgoing council regarded the provision as a vote of no confidence in the corporation and an insult to those involved in programme-making.³⁶

The tribunal had a liberal attitude towards permissible broadcasting. Its first case, heard in June 1977, concerned the question of language obscenity, a matter of some consequence in New Zealand where, in the 1960s, the Australian feminist Germaine Greer had been convicted for the public use of the word 'bullshit' and the student activist and later politician, Tim Shadbolt, had been able to publish his book *Bullshit and Jellybeans* only

with a warning about the offending word. Although decorum was less strictly pursued in the 1970s the permissible remained far from clear. In 1975 the chief superintendent of police issued a formal warning to the Broadcasting Council of an apparent breach of the radio regulations through the use of obscene language in a Brian Edwards-compered programme on TV1.³⁷ There was no prosecution but the warning was obvious and broadcasters were happy to have the topic addressed. The tribunal gave a decision on the use of arguably the most contentious word in the lexicon, fuck. The matter arose from a TV1 programme entitled *A Fate Worse Than Death*, screened at 9pm on Sunday 27 February 1977 in the current affairs programme *Seven Days*. In the programme a 22-year-old student recounted her experience of an attempted rape. Her words included, 'He grabbed hold of me and said something like "Do you want a fuck?"' A complaint that the use of the word was obscene was rejected by both TV1 and the BCNZ Complaints Review Committee and then taken to the tribunal. While acknowledging 'the use of the word at present in most contexts would not be generally acceptable to the community; in some instances it would be obscene', the tribunal judged that context was important and that it was not possible to state that a word was always either acceptable or unacceptable. The use of this word in this programme was 'unexceptional' and not used in an 'insulting or indecent way'. The tribunal also felt it would have been 'quite irresponsible' to have given prior warning of the use of the word: 'It would have led to an undesirable concentration on the existence of the word in the programme and would have advertised and highlighted its use'.³⁸

This decision made clear the importance of context and changed the earlier understanding that some words were obscene and unacceptable in and of themselves. Although there was considerable sense in the tribunal's view, it did allow previously forbidden words to gradually become acceptable, not just in their precise meaning, as in the tribunal decision, but as general swear words. For a time the problem became one of timing. In 1982, for example, following swearing on *The Great Kiwi Concert Show*, Allan Martin, TVNZ's director-general, banned swearing on all programmes before 8.30pm and rescheduled the offending programme from 7pm to 10pm.³⁹ By the 1990s such sensitivity had faded further. For a new generation what had been obscenities became part of accepted parlance and various programmes, from films to popular music, could, with impunity, mention 'motherfuckers' during prime time.

The tribunal also took issue with practices broadcasters regarded as acceptable. This became clear when TV1's consumer affairs programme *Fair Go* was taken to task regarding a November 1977 programme. Sincere and forthright in its investigations of consumer complaints, the long-running series, which went to air in 1977, accentuated the personalities of its reporters and the interplay between them. It informed and amused its audi-

A publicity
photograph for the
Fair Go team. NZMA



ence, gained consistently good viewing ratings and became a national influence on business ethics and had a considerable effect on the reputations of those it investigated. Broadcasters thought highly of the programme and it won the Best Information category in the annual television awards for the two following years. But the programme also epitomised the ambivalent position of media investigation where the requirements of entertainment jockeyed with those of due process. In its first judgement of the programme the tribunal upbraided the programme for a 'clear lack of accuracy' and took the opportunity to speak of *Fair Go* generally. It noted the 'real dangers in trial by television' and sympathised with the dilemma facing the man investigated by the programme who had to decide whether 'to go to Wellington to appear in strange surroundings to defend his company in front of the skilled television interviewer whose eyebrow raising may mean more to the audience than anything said in the programme'. The tribunal saw broadcasting as a power within the land which at least occasionally required curbing. Broadcasters' orientation was to the delivery of entertaining programmes. This, as with *Fair Go*, regularly brought conflicts of interest in which recognition of the rights of those investigated was clouded by the desire for a clear-cut villain to pillory.

Conversely, broadcasters were anxious that their own rights to due process be upheld. Complaints regarding news and current affairs broadcasting aroused the most concern. Broadcasting journalists were opposed to the complaints procedure and at its 1978 AGM the Association of

Broadcasting Journalists (ABJ), backed by the PSA, instructed its members not to co-operate in any way in aiding either the tribunal's deliberations or the BCNZ's internal complaints procedure. They were deeply suspicious of the tribunal which, as a statutory body appointed by the minister of broadcasting, they considered 'unable to be accepted in an ethical adjudication role...as truly independent'. They were also unappreciative of the legislation which treated them differently from journalists employed by the privately owned newspapers. News and current affairs broadcasters were included in the publicly operated supervision process whereas newspaper journalism remained, in their eyes, 'independent and unfettered'. They had further and major reservations about the tribunal's procedures. Even though a tribunal judgement could seriously damage the professional reputation of an individual editor, reporter or producer, they were unable to appear in their own right unless the defendant broadcasting organisation chose to call them as official witnesses. This they regarded as 'a denial of an inalienable right in our justice system'.⁴⁰ The ABJ was deeply suspicious of the entire complaints procedure but as a first step it requested the right to appoint its own nominee to the tribunal just as the journalists' union had its nominee on the Press Council. This was not granted.

One consequence of the new procedure *did* meet with the approval of the broadcasting journalists. Increasingly, complaints from politicians angered at treatment of themselves, their parties and policies were made formally. This meant that newsroom and current affairs staff were less frequently required to accept telephone calls from irate members of Parliament.⁴¹

In 1982 a separate body, the Broadcasting Complaints Committee, was established in that year's Broadcasting Amendment Act. It was abolished with the passage of the 1988 broadcasting legislation. The committee had only one member, Judge Max Willis, who held the office throughout the life of the committee. The establishment of the committee followed the government's acceptance of a BCNZ proposal that 'personal injury' complaints should be handled by a separate body.⁴² The committee was empowered only to hear complaints regarding unwarranted infringement of privacy or unjust and unfair treatment in programmes. Complaints could not be made in the public interest but only by the person directly affected by a programme. Few complaints were made to the committee and, of those, most were either not upheld or the committee declined to consider them.

COMMITTEE OF PRIVATE BROADCASTERS

The 1976 act also instituted the Committee of Private Broadcasters to deal with complaints about private broadcasters. Appointments were made by the minister from nominations received from the private station operators. The first chairman of the three-person committee was D. W. Stevens,

mayor of Dargaville, and the other members were associated with one or other of the private stations. Because members could not adjudicate on complaints dealing with their own stations, each appointment was accompanied by the appointment of a deputy who would sit instead on such occasions. The inaugural meeting was held on 28 April 1977. The committee was abolished in 1982 when the procedure for complaints became the same as for corporation stations, namely that complaints were made in the first instance to the station's owners and, if a complainant were dissatisfied with their response, the matter could then be taken to the Broadcasting Tribunal.

The Committee of Private Broadcasters soon showed it was unwilling to accept the wide range of complaints allowed within the legislation. Most early complaints came from Auckland and concerned the talkback activities of Radio Pacific. The great majority of complaints were not upheld and the committee indicated it was reluctant even to hear them. It developed what it called the 'Eunice of Glen Eden Principle' whereby it ruled many complaints out of court. Under this principle, in opposition to the government's own view of the permissible range for complaints, the committee ruled it had jurisdiction to hear a complaint only when the complainant was directly involved in the broadcast or in the matter complained of. It would not consider complaints made on behalf of other people or in the public interest.⁴³

Various complaints to the committee were upheld but other than doing so and notifying the offending station of the decision the committee took little action and was reluctant to publicise its decisions. The tribunal asked that all committee decisions be copied and sent to all private stations, the IBA and the BCNZ. The committee refused, arguing that Parliament's intention, as expressed in the legislation, was that complaints to the tribunal be public but those to the committee be private. It would inform complainants and the stations concerned of its decisions but otherwise they would remain confidential.⁴⁴

The self-disciplining instituted for the private broadcasters was as ineffectual as the system that previously applied to their public counterparts. All broadcasters were reluctant to discipline themselves. All experienced conflicts of interest where the same people were required both to attract an audience and to judge what was permissible in that process. In the dual loyalties to Mammon and virtue, the desire for popular programming often outweighed the ability or willingness to acknowledge the accepted limits to programme content.

ALCOHOL ADVERTISING

Many of the complaints to the tribunal concerned matters about which there was no social consensus and no clear position stated in the legisla-

tion. A continuing and contentious example was the advertising of alcohol. When the NZBC began there was no doubt within the corporation that the broadcasting of advertisements for alcohol was improper, just as the broadcasting of advertisements for tobacco products was acceptable. Over the next years these positions were reversed as tobacco descended in public acceptability and came under an advertising ban, while alcohol was no longer regarded so negatively. In 1975 the Broadcasting Council was forced to consider the matter of alcohol advertising when private stations applied for a rule change regarding its advertising.⁴⁵ The council's decision was that, as ever, alcohol brand names could not be advertised, but, in a new development, that the names of alcohol-related organisations, such as Cook's Vineyards or the various liquor outlets, were permissible.

The one individual who did more than any other to dispute this decision and especially its implementation was Hamilton's Cliff Turner. With the passage of the 1976 act and the establishment of its more formal complaints procedure, he also became the most persistent of the complainants to the tribunal. During its deliberations on the 1976 Broadcasting Act, National government member Ian Shearer told the Cabinet Committee on Broadcasting about Turner, who was from his electorate, and his continual complaints regarding liquor advertising. Turner's complaints centred on advertisers' and broadcasters' evasions of the rules. The Cabinet committee suspected Turner had a point but declined to make the restrictions stronger. It accepted Turner's argument that the advertising of alcohol was not being restricted to the naming of liquor outlets, but it was pressed by the party caucus which held further restrictions to be an unwarranted interference by the state. Many of Turner's complaints were about an indirect advertising that came with the screening of billboards during the televising of outdoor events and particularly with sports sponsorship.⁴⁶ The committee considered these matters obviously impractical to prevent. As in the wider society, there was no government consensus on the issue and no lead was given in the legislation.

The ingenuity of advertisers easily kept pace with the rules against liquor advertising. In 1976, for instance, a Leopard beer can figured prominently in an anti-litter advertising campaign sponsored by Leopard Breweries. Some members of the Broadcasting Council felt there was virtue in the anti-litter message while others saw the campaign as liquor advertising cleverly attached to a social issue. Whatever the views, the council felt there was little it could do other than keep watch on such activities.⁴⁷ A later complaint on the same topic prompted a stronger response: the tribunal upheld the complaint, regarding the anti-litter advertisement as really a disguised liquor advertisement and, therefore, in breach of TV2's warrant.⁴⁸

The files of the Broadcasting Tribunal are heavy with complaints from Turner, repeated acknowledgments from the tribunal that he has a point

and further repeated acknowledgments that the rules are unsatisfactory. In May 1978 the Special Broadcasting Rules Committee, a joint committee of the BCNZ and IBA, decided to allow liquor advertising on radio. This decision was against the advice of the BCNZ and was deplored by the government caucus with the government threatening legislation to stop the broadcasting of liquor advertisements. Slane, who chaired the committee, acknowledged the change of rule allowed brand identification and replaced the old rule limiting advertisements to the naming of wholesale and retail outlets. The change was an attempt to remove the double standards of the old rule whereby brand names were actually being broadcast. Slane said the new rule was a 12-month trial to be reconsidered after that time. Further, with the BCNZ stating its stations would not take advantage of the relaxation, the changes would feature on a maximum of seven stations, the number of commercial private stations then broadcasting, and it seemed an ideal opportunity to see if such advertising caused any deleterious effects.

Just what could and could not be advertised regarding alcohol remained unclear. In 1980, when upholding four complaints from Turner, the tribunal declined to impose any penalties because of the difficulty of interpreting the rules. It noted that its interpretation might have 'pushed the restrictions further than the respective legislators might have intended' and invited Parliament to put the matter right.⁴⁹ The invitation was not accepted. Lion Breweries, or its advertising agency, became so adept at treading the boundary of the alcohol advertising rule that in 1981 the tribunal issued the unprecedented direction to the BCNZ that 'no advertisement containing the brand name or corporate title Lion or Lion Breweries shall be broadcast without the prior consent of the Tribunal'.⁵⁰

During the time of the tribunal there was a gradual change whereby alcohol advertising increased within broadcasting and became more accepted as the audience grew accustomed to it. The change was led by advertisers and is an example of a chicken-egg conundrum within broadcasting where it is uncertain whether changing broadcasting practices lead to changes in public attitudes or vice versa. Without a clear lead from government or other authorities, however, broadcasters and advertisers will impose their own preferred understanding.

SUNDAY ADVERTISING

With no increase in the licence fee and with that fee continually eroded by the prevailing high inflation, the most likely way to increase revenue was to increase advertising. In 1980 the BCNZ finally abandoned the New Zealand public broadcaster's long refusal to consider Sunday advertising. It joined with the private radio stations and applied to the tribunal to broadcast advertisements on radio on Sundays. The tribunal considered no great

harm would come from Sunday advertising but also queried why an advertising free day should be surrendered. It saw no benefit to listeners from the proposal, since the applicants had not been prepared to state that the extra revenue would go into programmes. Nor were the private applicants ready to impose any restraints, although RNZ did propose a 10-minute per hour limit to Sunday advertising. The tribunal noted that the traditional religious reasons for opposing Sunday advertising were no longer as strong and that there was no government policy announcement on the topic and therefore no directive to follow. Following the council's precedent, the tribunal decreed that the early hours of Sunday were an extension of Saturday night broadcasting and allowed advertising generally up to 6am on Sundays. But with that exception the application was denied.⁵¹

Three years later, with the BCNZ still in financial difficulties, increased advertising was again considered. Initially radio and television were treated differently. The TVNZ director-general urged the board to apply for an extra advertising day without delay but most board members were unhappy with the suggestion and it was not followed. On radio it was a different matter. The RNZ director-general asked for support for Sunday advertising from the board. Since the tribunal had already rejected the idea, the board considered an approach should be made directly to the government and in concert with the IBA. Following discussion with G. Isles, the IBA secretary, a co-ordinated approach was made, asking the government to remove all restrictions on advertising. By this time the board had lost its scruples over television Sunday advertising and wanted change for that medium too. If the request were successful, the plan was for TV1 to have Sunday advertising up to 6pm and TV2 from 6pm while RNZ would carry advertising on all days up to an average of 18 minutes an hour. The government refused to short-circuit the tribunal's decision-making authority and in November 1983 the board decided to apply to the tribunal for Sunday advertising on radio and one television channel. If that was not accepted, then a further application would be made for advertising on both channels on Fridays and Saturdays. The slowness of the tribunal meant no decision was reached before the 1984 election brought change of government.⁵² Although no change was made in 1983, the year did mark the arrival of unanimity among all broadcasters in favour of seven-day advertising on both radio and television.

FM RADIO

FM radio, its introduction, its preferred ownership and its permitted patterns of use became one of the continuing topics before the Broadcasting Tribunal. The NZBC had long regarded FM radio as unnecessary. This view changed when the Broadcasting Council introduced an emphasis on FM as a basis for future radio networking. RNZ disagreed. Hartstonge, its

director-general, contended instead that FM should be introduced as part of an RNZ gradual expansion of its own coverage. The council then resolved to set up a VHF-FM planning co-ordinating committee.⁵³ This developed into a more official committee when, in November 1975, just before his party lost power, Fraser Coleman, the postmaster-general, called for a report on FM. The committee formed had members from the Broadcasting Council and RNZ, along with the IBA, the Post Office, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Radio and Television Manufacturers' Federation. National's election manifesto had included a pledge to introduce FM and in 1976 Templeton advised that the Cabinet Committee on Communications still wanted the report under the original terms of reference. These were to define the role for the existing AM medium frequency stations and to comment on the need for VHF-M stations. Then, assuming these were wanted, the committee was to plan its introduction, identify the costs and outline possible programming. The report from the VHF-FM Sound Broadcasting Planning Committee was handed to the minister in October 1978. The long investigation — three years — had been caused mainly by the engineering subcommittee which did much investigative work, dealing with 58 separate study and research papers. In the interim Templeton had twice instructed the Broadcasting Tribunal not to call for applications for FM warrants. He admitted his party had failed to fulfil its pledge to introduce FM radio stations, but said the report would not be released until after the 1978 election.

FM provides an enhanced quality sound broadcast coverage at VHF, about 100 MHz, which is especially noticeable in the reproduction of music. It also requires less radiated power than AM for a given signal quality and coverage. Up to the time the committee considered the matter, only the two television channels used FM for broadcasting in New Zealand, though it was also used in other forms of radio communication. The NZBC in 1968 and the NZBA in 1969 both felt it was unnecessary to proceed with FM. In the intervening decade the medium- and low-frequency (MF and LF) bands became crowded and administrators and politicians were willing to look at FM as something other than an expensive luxury. As use of the MF and LF bands increases, interference rises and both signal quality and coverage are endangered. The VHF band eventually provides the only prospect for further good-quality and wide coverage sound broadcasting. The committee considered that New Zealand had reached this stage. As at October 1978 New Zealand had two RNZ non-commercial networks plus 26 RNZ commercial stations. There were also seven commercial private stations plus 4XD, the only private non-commercial station. Only limited further development was possible for the AM services; the time had arrived to begin FM broadcasting. There are various VHF-FM systems but the pilot-tone system is the one adopted in most countries and it was agreed that New Zealand should follow suit.

The committee was eager to avoid the proliferation of private translators and repeaters that had been built in the 1960s for television. To do so would require the speedy coverage of provincial and rural areas along with the main metropolitan centres and there was considerable debate on this point. Also discussed was where to site FM transmitters but the final consensus was against city sites because of interference problems; the transmitters should be sited in the same areas as the 25 existing main television transmitters, which should allow countrywide coverage rapidly and relatively cheaply. Not only were these BCNZ television transmitter sites out of the cities but because such things as road access were already developed the costs of development would be relatively low. Senior among the 25 were the 'big eight' television transmitter sites.⁵⁴ These gave television coverage to 77 per cent of the population and were linked to 17 medium-powered transmitters that gave coverage to a further 12 per cent. For television, the remainder of the population was covered by an additional 346 low-powered transmitters but there was no suggestion from the committee that an initial FM audience could include this final 11 per cent of New Zealanders.

The BCNZ representatives contended that FM should first be introduced on its two non-commercial networks, whereas the IBA wanted it to be introduced into commercial stations with mass appeal programming. The final recommendations were as follows: the tribunal would determine, in terms of the 1976 Broadcasting Act, all applications for FM warrants; the more densely populated areas would be covered first; and, especially in the early stages, mass appeal programming was needed to attract the maximum number of listeners and therefore build up a FM audience.⁵⁵

Having received the report the government decided against introducing FM immediately and continued this policy until 1981 when, in February, Warren Cooper, now minister, announced the government now wanted the development of FM broadcasting and called for a further report, this time from the Broadcasting Tribunal. The report, completed by the end of August, called for the introduction of FM broadcasting without delay.

The tribunal accepted and repeated most of the engineering recommendations set out in the earlier report. It also repeated the call for the more populated areas to be covered first; the first applications should be called in Auckland. Its main contribution lay in its recommendations on simulcasting, broadcasting the same programme simultaneously on FM and AM, on ownership and on the rights of the BCNZ. The tribunal advised against this. It wanted the two types of radio broadcasting to develop separately and did not accept the arguments that if existing broadcasters obtained an FM warrant, they should be able to broadcast the same programmes on their AM and new FM stations, thus allowing them to gradually develop an audience for FM while retaining their commercial

base on AM. The tribunal allowed the simultaneous broadcasting of news and special events but not of programmes in general.

With regard to ownership rights, the tribunal relaxed somewhat its restrictions on multiple ownership of stations while staying true to its philosophy that ownership should be local and diverse. It recommended that owners of stations be permitted a shareholding of no more than 15 per cent in up to five other stations, except that in any one market such cross-ownership be restricted to no more than one AM and one FM station. It pulled back from its previous concern that newspaper companies should not own radio stations as it considered FM stations would have less emphasis on news than AM stations. Applications from newspaper companies for ownership of FM stations should be considered on their merits.

The first hearings for FM warrants were for Auckland where there were two on offer. The BCNZ had the same right as others to apply for FM warrants and in Auckland applied for a warrant for 1ZM. In the years since private radio had restarted, the corporation had reoriented its ZM stations to reach the same young-adult audience. This frank recognition of the appeal of the private stations had met with some success. Various private station personnel had been recruited to the ZM stations, among them David Gapes of Radio Hauraki fame. On joining 1ZM Gapes said, 'It's the kind of radio station I always hoped Hauraki would become.'⁵⁶

There were four applicants for the two warrants. The competition was essentially between FM Enterprises and Metropolitan FM Broadcasting, both aiming for a 25 to 44 age group, and Stereo Frequency Modulation and the BCNZ's 1ZM, which both aimed for the young audience. Radio Hauraki had intended to apply for a FM warrant but the tribunal's policy against simulcasting meant Hauraki could not have the financial support of its AM broadcasts while it built an audience of FM. There was a split in Hauraki's management: most directors considered the risks were too great to continue with the FM application but Derek Lowe regarded it as absurd not to proceed. Lowe was removed and Radio Hauraki withdrew its FM application.

The warrants, issued in August 1982, were granted to Stereo Frequency Modulation Ltd, in which Wilson & Horton, owners of the *New Zealand Herald*, had a 12.5 per cent interest, and Metropolitan FM Broadcasting Ltd. The former broadcast as 89FM and the latter as Magic 91. The tribunal had no problems with the Wilson & Horton shareholding, noting the proposed FM station was primarily a music- rather than a news-oriented station. There would be difficulties if Wilson & Horton wanted to establish shareholdings in other stations in the same market but the regulations limited such possibilities.

The sting in the tribunal decision was applied to 1ZM. The tribunal had a non-commercial attitude towards 1ZM; in 1980 it allowed the extension of ZM network broadcasts into the midnight to 6am hours, thus



RNZ used its ZM stations to compete directly with private radio for the youth market. Here 2ZM announcers, from left, John Stier, Claire Campbell and Lloyd Scott show their style with pop star Craig Scott. *EVENING POST*

introducing 24-hour broadcasts. While doing this, the tribunal introduced a condition that, in those extended hours, 'the station predominantly directs its normal programmes towards minority modern music interests'. In this way it both gave the extra hours but defined their use so that RNZ lost much of the benefit of the extension.⁵⁷ In its 1982 FM decision, pre-figured in its 1981 report, the tribunal further attacked 1ZM's commercial nature. It not only denied it any immediate or early commercial FM warrant but went further and recommended that the corporation cease operating 1ZM as a commercial station when the first commercial FM stations went to air. RNZ was not only denied entry to commercial FM radio but also required to clear the field for its privately owned rivals.

The tribunal was strongly critical of RNZ. It described 1ZM as 'one of the corporation's worst performing stations' and 'considered Stereo FM would do a better job for the listener'. It accepted the 1ZM staff were competent but was 'not satisfied that the structure within which they work is an ideal one for the successful launch of commercial FM in Auckland'. Stopping 1ZM stations from being commercial, it reasoned, would free some \$2 million a year in advertising revenue and give the new FM stations a good start, but would present little difficulty to the RNZ as 1ZM and the other ZM stations had run at a loss for some years. RNZ executives were aghast and decried the proposal as 'private enterprise asking for state protection'.⁵⁸ The government caucus, however, endorsed the recommendation and on 14 April 1982 Ian Shearer, the minister, directed the BCNZ to cease running 1ZM as a commercial station, except for limited sponsorship, once FM radio was introduced in Auckland. Cross acknowledged he had no option but to comply but pointed out it could be 12 months before FM began in Auckland. The

permission for limited sponsorship was a slight withdrawal from the original recommendation to cease commercial activity entirely but the definition of such sponsorship was strict and from 1 June 1983 1ZM effectively stopped broadcasting as a commercial station.⁵⁹

The new FM stations had differing fortunes. Both began with the pioneering difficulty of broadcasting at a time when few Aucklanders had FM equipment. But ownership of the new technology grew rapidly and by the start of 1985 more than half of Auckland households had FM receivers though the number in cars, a major site for radio listening, was much slower to increase. Both stations aimed for a young adult audience, but 91FM, with Trevor Egerton as managing director, operated parsimoniously with a small staff and infrequent news bulletins purchased from Radio Pacific. That practice, coupled with its hit record format, gave it a profit from the start which grew as the FM audience expanded. Station 89FM, on the other hand, attempted a new album-oriented format with less emphasis on hit records. This met with little success and only when there was a change in shareholding, particularly the entry of Sydney radio station Triple M, was a more standard commercial format introduced and 89FM became profitable.

After allowing the two Auckland FM warrants, the tribunal looked unkindly on other applications. It deferred Radio Rhema's application to start an Auckland station with relays in Hamilton, Tauranga and Whangarei. Even though the application was for non-commercial warrants, the tribunal considered Rhema's existence would discourage at least some listeners from tuning to the new FM stations. It saw 1983 as a critical year in Auckland with the two FM stations beginning and 1ZM changing, and wanted no more changes there until the radio scene had settled.⁶⁰ The tribunal did, however, accept that full-time FM stations could begin in other areas. It ended 1983 by calling for applications for commercial FM warrants in the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Hawke's Bay. Various short-term authorisations were issued, among them the student radio stations which began a move to FM transmissions. Auckland's Campus Radio was the first and, as an FM station, later had yet another name change, this time to BFM. This change meant Auckland had three FM stations before others began elsewhere. Wellington's student station, Radio Active, became the second of the student stations to convert to FM. In 1983 it spent \$20,000 on preparations for FM broadcasting; that low cost reflected both student frugality and the relative cheapness of FM.

The new-look 1ZM targeted the 10- to 19-year-old audience, hoping for its loyalty in later and more profitable years. The tribunal wanted 1ZM to lose its audience share but, one month after the station was decommercialised, its ratings were holding well and Wakem, RNZ's director-general, was cautiously optimistic about the station's prospects with the audience. A year into the change it held 10 per cent of the Auckland audience, on a par with its FM rivals, and had a sound lead in its target age group. The



Merv Smith, 1ZB announcer and long-time king of Auckland radio, at work. NZBC

private stations regarded 1ZM as flouting the tribunal's advertising restrictions and ignoring its desire for the station to leave their territory. The restrictions were clear and policed, however. The tribunal allowed limited sponsorship credits only. It forbade 1ZM the use of slogans, jingles and other staples of radio advertising, effectively shutting out most advertisements prepared for other stations. Agencies and advertisers had to make separate sponsorship credits for 1ZM. The station's income was not entirely lost but did suffer a large decline.

One advantage of the changed 1ZM was that it acted as a protector for 1ZB, RNZ's premier Auckland commercial station. Particularly by taking a share of the audience from Radio Hauraki, 1ZM helped 1ZB to remain at the top of the Auckland audience ratings. However 1ZB was not entirely reliant on 1ZM to hold its top position. It retained its announcing personnel for many more years than its rivals and this stability made it, of all commercial stations, RNZ and private, the most successful in its own right. A dominant factor was the continuing success of its breakfast show host, Merv Smith. The morning sessions were the major revenue earners for commercial radio and Smith's domination of the Auckland airwaves, by far the largest radio market, was the linchpin in RNZ's commercial profitability.

The changes were of considerable consequence to the Auckland private AM stations, with both Radio Hauraki and Radio Pacific badly affected. With new FM stations and their higher quality transmission of music taking



Derek Lowe of Radio Pacific. NZMA

a share of the audience, Radio Hauraki now faced further and unanswerable competition on the AM band from 1ZM for a young audience that disliked advertisements. One result was the halving of Radio Hauraki's share price in the first half of 1982. At Radio Pacific the changed nature of Auckland radio exacerbated the financial difficulties the station had always faced. In response there was a change of leadership: Gordon Dryden was removed and replaced by Derek Lowe, himself not long removed from Radio Hauraki. Lowe was a shareholder in Radio Pacific and in 1982 answered calls to protect his and others' investment first by joining the board and, by mid-year, becoming managing director. He continued in that position until 1999. Lowe's control of Radio Pacific was the start of a change in the station's fortunes though at the cost of further commitment to the station's original warrant conditions. Multilingual programming was dropped, as was that to do with child and teenage education. Originally supported by a Maori and Polynesian Auckland community, whose cause it elected to champion, Radio Pacific found that such an orientation was too expensive for a commercial radio station. The station continued to appeal to an over-40 age group, with its talkback programming earning it a redneck reputation that was quite the reverse of its original positioning.

Stations 2ZM and 3ZM remained fully commercial and oriented to the young adult audience, matters the BCNZ considered essential for RNZ finances. On FM, the corporation was eager to compete with the private stations and wanted both permission to transmit on FM and the restric-

tions on 1ZM lifted as soon as possible. In March 1984 RNZ's Beverley Wakem described the tribunal requirements as 'excessively punitive' and argued that, as they were imposed to allow the private FM stations a settling-in period, it now seemed in order to approach the tribunal about relaxing the 1ZM advertising restrictions. As FM spread, the BCNZ also became concerned at the signal strength of its competitors. It considered the private stations' FM transmitters were over-powered and therefore were sending a strong signal beyond their urban bases into areas previously mainly covered by RNZ AM stations. In response, RNZ proposed a full FM-ZM commercial network. This was endorsed by the board and an application was made to the tribunal accordingly. Networking 1, 2 and 3ZM was phase one of a plan to syndicate a RNZ network of nine stations catering for a young adult audience. RNZ argued that, within the proposed network, local stations would be able to retain a local identity. The tribunal did not give a rapid reply and, with the election of the Labour government, further deferred its decision when the new minister expressed interest in the matter.⁶¹ At this stage RNZ changed its tactics and purchased outright 89FM, the station granted one of the two original Auckland FM warrants. Although this was in defiance of the tribunal policy, RNZ executives considered it necessary so as to have a commercial FM voice in Auckland, its largest market.⁶² RNZ sold 89FM in later years when 1ZM was finally able to broadcast in FM.

The BCNZ had better fortune with the tribunal in its application to introduce FM to non-commercial radio. The BCNZ wanted the Concert Programme, broadcast on the YC stations, to be converted to FM. The YC stations reached 60 per cent of the population, primarily in and around the four main centres, with that statistic decreasing to 55 per cent at night. A conversion to FM was supported by Friends of the Concert Programme, a pressure group which, according to its representative, Dr W. G. Hopkins, totalled 5000 members. At this time there was considerable criticism of the Concert Programme. Opponents attacked it as élitist, asking why one style of music should be uninterrupted while all other types were required to carry advertising. Friends of the Concert Programme argued for the worth and continuation of the classical tradition. With a high proportion of its members in high status occupations, the group was an effective lobbyist able to influence the government which, in November 1982, accepted the BCNZ proposal. At the end of that year, Shearer directed the BCNZ to apply for FM for the Concert Programme, but he also directed the corporation to apply for permission to advertise on the programme with a combination of sponsorship and direct advertising to a maximum of six minutes an hour.

The BCNZ added to the directive: it wanted to introduce FM to the YC stations on a national basis rather than piecemeal, region by region, so it applied for one overall warrant for the entire YC-FM development. It

also applied for permission to simulcast — to transmit the Concert Programme simultaneously on the existing AM stations and on the new FM frequencies as it developed the FM network. The plan in the short term was not to shift the Concert Programme entirely to FM but to replicate it by continuing to broadcast it also on the YC-AM stations so as to keep that section of the audience who did not have FM receivers or were unable to receive an FM signal. The YC-AM stations also carried *Sports Roundup* along with educational programmes and the transmissions from Parliament. In the long-term, these stations would be dedicated to these spoken programmes. The BCNZ plan to use FM principally for music broadcasting was in line with other countries. RNZ's John Douglas, returning from a trip to the United States, reported to the board that the trend there was to use FM for music while the AM stations were using mainly a talkback format. Plans for the New Zealand National Programme were in line with this general division; the board was told that proposals were not fully formed but that RNZ was inclining towards the programme taking mostly a talk format.⁶³

The tribunal was most reluctant to allow advertising on the Concert Programme or on any of the so far non-commercial stations. The tribunal faced the recurring problem that it was invited to increase advertising time on commercial stations and introduce it on non-commercial stations to compensate for the comparative lowering of income from the unchanging licence fee. It resisted such invitations. In 1981, for example, the tribunal declined a BCNZ application to introduce advertising on *Sports Roundup*, instead requiring the corporation to ask the government its policy regarding licence fee increases. If there was to be no increase the corporation could apply again to the tribunal. But the tribunal did not accept that it should discard the principle of non-commercial broadcasting because of the low level of fee revenue.⁶⁴ The tribunal regularly voiced its concern at the continuing decrease in funding for public broadcasting,⁶⁵ lamenting the lack of a government policy in relation to licence fees and noting that the result was an 'undesirable . . . increasingly commercial attitude in both radio and television'. The government, it considered, should state definitely whether it was prepared to support and therefore fund public broadcasting. But the tribunal failed to gain any change in attitude from the government. Eventually, in 1984, it acceded to the BCNZ requests and did allow advertising on the Concert Programme but conditionally. The requested maximum of six minutes per hour was allowed but only temporarily. Advertising was only to be during the development phase — for five years, up to August 1989.⁶⁶ In practice, the 1984 change of government altered the circumstances and there was no advertising on the Concert Programme.

The delay before the tribunal delivered its decision on Concert Programme advertising also meant a delay on the conversion of that programme to FM as the BCNZ would not proceed with the change to FM

without advertising. During the long waiting period the Concert Programme hours were extended to 18 a day to give impetus to the application. The decision was generally favourable to the corporation: the tribunal recommended the Concert Programme convert to FM and be extended to provincial areas by the use of further FM stations. The tribunal was unimpressed, however, with the application to simulcast, seeing the logic for this as a subterfuge. The tribunal regarded Concert Programme listeners as financially capable of obtaining FM equipment and it believed the BCNZ tactic was designed not to help its listeners but to ensure it retained use of the AM frequencies. The tribunal allowed the FM conversion but did not give one warrant for the entire proposed FM concert network. Instead it required applications for each separate station.

The initial use of FM for the Concert Programme was in Hawke's Bay, the first area beyond the four main centres to receive the Concert Programme when, in 1977, RNZ opened the AM station Apple Radio there. It was a hybrid station, broadcasting commercially during the day and transmitting the Concert Programme from 7pm. In 1983 the tribunal allowed the extension of FM to Hawke's Bay when it gave permission for two stations: a pilot 1kW transmitter was installed at Mount Erin and first used for Concert Programme broadcasting on 12 December 1983 and, on the same day, a private commercial FM station, 93FM, also opened.

The Muldoon era ended with tribunal approval for the permanent FM Concert Programme transmission in Hawke's Bay and for a further extension of that coverage to the Waikato. From 1 December 1984 a permanent 1kW transmitter was in use for the Concert Programme at Mount Erin and on that date the first of a series of 10kW Concert Programme transmitters became operational at Mount Te Aroha.⁶⁷

LISTENER

The development of FM radio indicated a political preference for private over corporation broadcasting. That this preference applied generally to the corporation's activities became more apparent with a change that was forced on the *Listener*. It was administered by Ian Shearer who, succeeding Warren Cooper, became minister of broadcasting in December 1981. Shearer was soon made aware of the strength of National caucus opinion against the BCNZ. At the first meeting in February 1982 he received what was referred to as a 'stinging rebuff'. Shearer put up six names, which he indicated came from Ian Cross, to fill the vacancies on the board. The caucus wiped all six and called for fresh nominees. The caucus also ordered the removal of the *Listener's* monopoly right to publish radio and television schedules a week in advance. In 1980 talks between the BCNZ and NPA had resulted in daily newspapers renewing their right to publish programme schedules 24 hours in advance and for longer periods over week-

ends. Weekly newspapers gained permission to list up to three television programmes on each channel each day along with all films to be shown during the week. Newspaper publishers had long wanted an extension of these rights and strongly supported the 1982 caucus decision. Shearer, a defender of the *Listener*, argued against the change but to no avail. He expressed his disappointment at the decision but Muldoon, a strong supporter of the majority caucus position, said it would not be reversed. Shearer therefore delivered a written instruction to the board to make this information available at reasonable cost to any publisher who wanted it.

The *Listener* editor at the time was Peter Stewart, appointed to the position in July 1980. He had extensive experience in both broadcasting and newspaper journalism, having been an SPTV current affairs programmes executive producer and an editor of Dunedin's *Evening Star*. In a spirited defence of the *Listener*, Stewart contended other publishers had a 'lack of interest' in radio programmes and were concerned only with publishing television programme information. Recognising the extent of public interest in television, they saw the government directive as a means to increase circulation. Stewart noted 'the marked growth in profitability' of the *Listener*, with profits of more than \$1 million in each of the two previous years. He argued that the magazine's very success had led to newspaper organisations wanting a share of the profits.⁶⁸

The BCNZ fought the decision strongly but it was a losing battle. Cross, backed by the board, considered that the directive contravened both the Broadcasting and Copyright Acts and said the corporation would take all steps to resist. John Burrows, Professor of Law at the University of Canterbury and an authority on media law, backed Cross and the government directive was not obeyed. This opposition had drastic consequences for the membership of the board. The terms of four members, C. J. Freeman, I. W. (Iain) Gallaway, P. S. Stannard and Professor Whatarangi Winiata, all expired the following month. On Muldoon's orders, none was reappointed. They were replaced by Howard Morrison, the well-known entertainer but by this time also working with the Department of Maori Affairs, Douglas Ross and John Peebles, both Auckland company directors, and Richard Rowley, an Oamaru lawyer. The first knowledge the retiring board members had of the wholesale replacements was their announcement in the media.⁶⁹

Countering the board's resistance, the government determined to pass suitable amending legislation which Muldoon said would mean the government could direct the corporation in virtually any area other than day-to-day running. Cross argued against the proposed legislation. Regarding the *Listener* he said, 'We are making good use of an asset.' With no public complaints about the programme information in the magazine, the government proposal would be regarded as 'based on a political reaction to the magazine's editorial policies'. He counselled against the other mea-

asures in the bill which he saw as weakening the independence of the corporation and a marked change from the government's 1976 requirement that the BCNZ act 'with maximum independence'. The bill was 'largely returning the corporation to the position of the old NZBC . . . suspicions about political interference . . . will be given credence by the proposed legislation'. The 'highlighting of the Minister's new powers of direction is, I believe, bound to shift accountability for difficult areas of popular concern about broadcasting from the Corporation to the Minister. To say the least this will prove a mixed blessing for the Government and the Minister.'⁷⁰

The eventual legislation, the first of the Broadcasting Amendment Acts of 1982, was not as draconian as Muldoon's earlier words implied, but did clearly allow the government to end the *Listener's* monopoly right to publish full prior details of broadcasting programme schedules. In spite of some discontent from National backbenchers,⁷¹ this was passed in August with a one-vote majority.

Shearer stated there would be 'no great haste' to strip the *Listener* of its monopoly but again the caucus disagreed and by early November the new details were implemented. Programme material was available to any publisher at a cost of two cents for every copy of an issue the information appeared in. Publishers argued, naturally, that this cost was too high but were more affronted by a further proviso which said the corporation could withhold the information if it decided a publisher had published any defamatory matter or malicious falsehood in respect of the BCNZ. A publisher could respond by suing for breach of contract but in the meantime would have lost the ability to publish advance programme details.

PRIVATE TELEVISION

The *Listener's* monopoly power was a significant part of the BCNZ's finances and its ending was a blow, but the most important of the broadcasting topics under consideration was the further development of television broadcasting. Whether there would be a further television channel, and if so who would control it, was much debated within government and broadcasting circles as well as in the country at large. It became a major issue before the tribunal. Added to the topic was the question whether private enterprise had a place within the existing structure, either by leasing time on one or both of the existing channels or by purchasing one channel outright.

When he became broadcasting minister, Templeton was sent an application from the Independent Television Network Group to operate a commercial television service using existing facilities but on non-commercial days. Templeton sent the application on to the Broadcasting Council where it met a mixed reception. One member, Cole Catley, saw the application as one way of countering the television corporations' reluctance to

give commissions to independent film companies, but the overall council response was negative. It regarded it as a backdoor application for a warrant and, in spite of the proposal being forwarded by the minister, queried whether it was compatible with government policy. The council decided it was opposed to leasing time and that the corporations must retain responsibility for programmes transmitted.⁷² Such a decision was not accepted by everyone in the BCNZ, particularly by Cross when he became chairman. From the time the second channel began Cross felt there should be a third operated by private enterprise. This he saw as both in the interests of the New Zealand viewer and as a way to lessen the public and political critical attention that was focused on the BCNZ. For Cross, the ideal was for one of the BCNZ channels to become non-commercial, a goal he considered possible but the government would not accept it because the policy was that television should be commercial and thus remain as a revenue producer for the state. He also felt there was considerable scepticism about such a goal within TVNZ, especially from programme-makers, who saw their future in commercial television where there was likely to be more money to make programmes.

The country's newspaper proprietors were much in favour of private television and had long wanted to control it themselves. At the start of the 1980s there were two versions of this desire. The Alternative Television Network (ATN), a consortium of New Zealand News, Independent Newspapers and Hauraki Enterprises, argued that the country could not afford a third channel and, to gain true television competition, one of TVNZ's channels should be sold to a private operator, namely ATN. Northern Television, another consortium of newspaper proprietors — Wilson & Horton, owners of the *New Zealand Herald*, along with the owners of the *Otago Daily Times* and the publishers of the *Press* — favoured a third channel, controlled by private enterprise and regionally based. Northern Television did much preparatory work, including the \$8 million purchase and equipping of a television production facility in Auckland's Mount Wellington.

Neither option was politically acceptable. Templeton wrote that the entry of private television faced continual opposition from Muldoon.⁷³ In spite of his threats, the prime minister was no advocate for substantial change and had no wish to sell one channel to private enterprise. Further, the Labour Party made would-be purchasers cautious by saying that, when it returned to power, it would compulsorily repurchase the channel at the same price for which it was sold. Nor was the option for a private enterprise third channel favoured. The Labour Opposition had its traditional dislike for private broadcasting and members of the government, particularly the rural MPs, did not support the proposal since they doubted whether there would be broadcasts to any region other than the lucrative market of Auckland.

But some form of private television was still wanted. Cross holds that 'an unholy combination' of himself, the minister and the National caucus all supported it. One way to start private television was to hire out unused television time to a competent private operator. In 1981 the BCNZ offered 31 hours a week unused on TV2 but, indicating the lack of consensus within the corporation, later withdrew the offer. Later the corporation offered Northern Television five hours a week on TV1, a weekday 11am to noon slot for which Northern Television could sell its own advertising. Muldoon announced the change, stating the day before the details of Northern Television's broadcasts were made public that his government would follow its directive to the *Listener* by also directing the BCNZ to introduce private television.

Michael Horton of Northern Television described his group's five hours as 'only a crumb'. Thomas Hunt, the chairman of the government Caucus Committee on Communication, acknowledged that he was 'rather disturbed' that so little time had been allocated. The crumb was fought adamantly within broadcasting, particularly by the PSA, which saw the change as private enterprise taking over public facilities. The first broadcast by private television in New Zealand was *Good Morning*, an 11am to noon magazine chat show aimed primarily at women at home, hosted by Tina Grenville and produced by Kevan Moore and Associates. The programme was in the tradition of and a development from the NZBC's 1967 afternoon programme *On Camera*. The prime minister opened Northern Television's South Auckland complex in April and on 21 June 1982 Northern Television began screening from 11am to noon Monday to Friday. The first programmes, however, were transmitted by videotape from Avalon rather than live from the Northern Television studio. The PSA had banned live transmission, arguing the programme should go through the normal editorial checks imposed by the BCNZ on other programmes. The following month Northern Television was granted its application to include advertising on Friday, previously a commercial-free day. Early the next year the BCNZ was told that Northern Television was clearly paying its way with the 11am to noon slot and that TVNZ should be able to do likewise with the following hour.⁷⁴ This information was incorrect and it was subsequently revealed that losses for Northern Television were in the order of \$2 million in the first year of operation.⁷⁵ *Good Morning* ended during 1983. Although it indicated that private television was possible on the publicly owned facilities, the experience was such that neither side wanted any further such collaboration. Private television had more future as a distinct stand-alone operation.

After the announcement that Northern Television was to begin transmissions Cross began preparations for a BCNZ policy on any extension of private enterprise involvement in television. 'If we do not have a positive line in the interests of broadcasting,' he told his board, 'Government may

rely on less well-informed sources and produce a bad policy.⁷⁶ He began by calling for a paper to be prepared within the corporation on the options available and, three weeks later, gave his board a preliminary report. Any sale of TV2 to private enterprise was seen as disastrous. A total sale would represent a net loss of advertising income of \$40.69 million in the first year and would be 'almost totally destructive of the present system'. A partial sale, giving three days per week of TV2 to private enterprise, would vary in lost revenue in accordance with which days were chosen. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday would be the best options for the BCNZ but even that option would involve a loss of some \$17 million and would be 'extremely damaging'. More acceptable options were a private enterprise third channel, even were it on VHF and served by the main BCNZ transmitting stations. Cross's view was, 'Philosophically we could have no objection to it.' He also had no doubt that the gradual financial impact of a third and private channel could be absorbed by the BCNZ. But for Cross and his board, if there had to be private television, the best option was some form of pay television, broadcasting in an encoded form, without advertising. Here the effects on BCNZ revenue would be minimal.⁷⁷ This option, however, did mean denying the BCNZ any first move into pay television. TVNZ's director-general had already told the BCNZ that the introduction of pay television by TVNZ was possible in Auckland using existing facilities where it could be started quickly and reasonably economically.⁷⁸

Fifteen months later, when Cross was required to report to the minister on the effects of selling or leasing TV2, he saw the financial effects as less difficult, with a full lease of TV2 involving a loss to the BCNZ of \$24.5 million in year one. But, in spite of this downgrading of the financial repercussions, the corporation regarded the loss of TV2 as unacceptable. As far as the BCNZ was concerned, its broadcasting system required all its constituent parts. Cross argued to his minister that though private enterprise interests saw television as something apart that could be separated from the BCNZ, it was an integral part of a broadcasting system which 'is the major single supporter of the arts in this country notably in music, drama, and light entertainment. It is the sole national forum of exchange of ideas and information, and the social role extends from being the only common link with the rest of the country shared by small rural communities to being the basis of the nation's civil defence system.' The integration of television with the rest of broadcasting was of enormous financial consequence because the funding for the entire system came mainly from television advertising. The previous year non-commercial radio had required \$15.5 million from the corporation, far more than its normal licence fee entitlement, and the NZSO was continuing its escalating requirement for subsidy from television earnings.⁷⁹ There was an exaggeration in Cross's reliance on television earnings, for commercial radio also pumped its surplus into

the corporation's non-commercial activities. But because television profits were more than double those of commercial radio, television advertising was the financial mainstay for the BCNZ. Cross also argued that any discussion of the sale of TV2 was academic only. The channel was so integrated into the total system that only the transmitters and aerials were separately identifiable. Buildings, roads, towers and the microwave linking system were so shared that a sale of a distinct TV2 was not feasible.⁸⁰

In June 1982, following the government's announced intention to introduce private television into New Zealand, Shearer released 10 options that were reviewed for the minister by the Communications Advisory Council (CAC). The chairman of the CAC was J. A. Burnet, a director of Alternative Television Network Ltd, one of the hopefuls in the competition to start private television, and the membership also included Ian Cross. The minister asked both men to dissociate themselves from the review because of the confidential material received. The different organisations' preferences were as expected. The IBA opted for a full-time private operator taking control of TV2 while the BCNZ opted for the status quo for TVNZ plus the lease of transmitter facilities for broadcast pay television outside the present hours. Its second preference was for the status quo for TVNZ plus the introduction of private UHF coverage at local, regional or national levels.⁸¹ The corporation's acceptance of private UHF coverage rested on the detail that restriction to the unused UHF band would deny private enterprise access to the vast existing television audience with their VHF-only capable sets.

By September the most likely option for the introduction of private television was regarded as a third channel in the regions. This was one of the less serious challenges to TVNZ's finances because it would attract a different form of advertising from that which went to the national networker. A bipartisan political accord was offered with the announcement from Jonathan Hunt, Labour's broadcasting spokesman, that his party could live with a third channel option for private enterprise.

This option was further supported when, in October 1982, the Officials Economic Committee recommended the establishment of an additional television channel for use by private enterprise and considered it should use the remaining VHF spectrum. It saw channel 10 as available in Auckland, Palmerston North, Christchurch and Invercargill and channel nine as available in the Waikato. It also recommended that the UHF band be made available for television broadcasting. The committee acknowledged that private television broadcasting 'may adversely affect' the BCNZ but it felt that the appropriate solution was not to protect the corporation from competition but to address directly the funding of non-commercial broadcasting.⁸²

Shearer therefore recommended to the caucus that a third channel be established by private enterprise, but his colleagues opted instead for allow-

ing private enterprise substantially more time on TV1. The suggestion was that this be all morning time, starting from 6.30 or 7am. The *New Zealand Herald* described the change as a 'major victory for rural lobby groups'.⁸³ The caucus still believed that private enterprise would be unlikely to introduce wide coverage for a third channel.

In February 1983 the minister of broadcasting informed the tribunal and corporation that it was government policy to introduce morning television and directed that some of the morning hours on TV1 be made available for broadcasting by an organisation other than the BCNZ.⁸⁴ He required the corporation to co-operate and directed the tribunal to call for warrants. Northern Television applied to operate from Auckland and City Television from Wellington. But this attempt to introduce private television came to nothing, fading in the face of resistance from the BCNZ. The corporation was able to oppose the private applicants because it determined the costs that should be charged for the use of its television facilities. Cross indicated that these facilities were extensive and expensive. He pointed out that the television network extended over 2700 kilometres, comprised over 400 transmitting stations and was supported by engineering services and maintenance teams at 16 bases. Neither of the private applicants tried to force a decision and both withdrew when the tribunal opened its hearings.

BCNZ opposition to private applicants was driven partly by its own reluctance to assist new channels while it remained committed to gaining an uneconomic universal coverage for TV2. In 1983, while the negotiations to control the next television channel were under way, the BCNZ reconsidered and reaffirmed its policy to extend TV2 coverage. But the decision came only after much debate. With his director of engineering stating that some areas were too small and remote ever to warrant coverage, Cross argued that, with TV1 having a 99 per cent coverage of the population and TV2 96 per cent, enough had been done. The government should be told that the corporation would go no further; if it wanted more coverage as a social service it should provide the necessary funding. A majority of board members disagreed: TV2's coverage would be extended to match TV1's. Accepting the decision, Cross suggested there would be a need to spread the increase over more than three years, that the government be told that the decision was a social and non-commercial one that would delay other commercially more desirable developments.⁸⁵

The government caucus still wanted private use of TVNZ and, in August 1983, requested a study of a series of options for making TV2 available to the private sector. The minister acted on this but at this stage attention again returned to a third channel, run by private enterprise, and quite unconnected to the BCNZ. In August 1983 Shearer gave Muldoon a report covering an alternative approach to the development of third channel coverage.⁸⁶ It involved a movement away from both national and

regional coverage and envisaged the establishment by the private sector of a large number of relatively low-powered local coverage UHF transmitters. It was based on the premise that, with TVNZ providing almost complete two-channel coverage of the whole country, it would be acceptable for private television to begin in a modest way in smaller centres and for minority interests. This would not prevent the development of regional coverage as national resources permitted.⁸⁷

Such a proposal, away from the main cities and without mass appeal programming, had little attraction for private enterprise. The postmaster-general, R. L. G. (Rob) Talbot, presented a further alternative: his organisation would provide a television transmission facility for private operators. This proposal, which involved the Post Office supporting a private channel and strengthening its own control of telecommunications, resulted from a July 1983 Cabinet observation that the establishment of both FM radio and private television broadcasting could be assisted by a non-broadcasting organisation providing broadcasting facilities on an equal and fair basis to all those requiring them. The Post Office had the skills and supporting services to provide the television transmitting facilities for private broadcasters.⁸⁸

Keen, as always, to control as much of the country's telecommunication system as possible, the Post Office seized upon Talbot's suggestion, which was for a satellite distribution network. Transmitting and receiving earth stations would be located in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch from any of which cities the programme could originate. Receiving only stations would be located, in the first instance, in Dunedin, Manawatu and the Waikato. From the satellite station bases the network would be linked by a combination of microwave distribution and VHR and UHF transmitters. When Shearer told Slane the government had agreed to the introduction of a third television channel, regional and private, without delay, he included a copy of the Post Office proposal. It was a clear indication that BCNZ co-operation was not essential.⁸⁹

In December 1983 the minister ordered the tribunal to meet with interested parties and discuss the introduction of a third channel. When the tribunal reported to the minister in March 1984 it recommended that new broadcasters be accepted and allowed to broadcast in either the VHF or UHF bands. The BCNZ disputed this and wanted private broadcasters only in the UHF band: allowing them in the VHF band would in effect mean that in Auckland channel 10 would be used. The corporation's policy was that this channel be reserved for Maori, Pacific Island and other minority broadcasting. It argued, too, that placing private enterprise in the UHF band would also give manufacturers an incentive to build UHF capable receiving sets. Once again the corporation mustered what arguments it could in the hope that private broadcasters would be barred from the VHF band covered by the existing television sets. Although the corporation was unable to influence the tribunal's recommendations, it was saved by the

prime minister's call for an early general election in 1984, the subsequent defeat of his government and the new Labour government's deferral of any decisions on broadcasting changes. In spite of the rhetoric against the BCNZ and calls for private broadcasting, the Muldoon era did not introduce any substantial changes to the overall public ownership and control of television.

THE JACKSON COMMISSION

The Muldoon government's reluctance to introduce major change to the organisation of public broadcasting was also shown in its reaction to the report of the Jackson commission, which offered an excellent pretext for change if the government had wanted it. The Jackson commission inquired into an episode at the end of the Muldoon era, namely an allegation of corrupt practices within the light entertainment section of the TVNZ, in particular that to do with the running of the programme *That's Country*.⁹⁰ Two of the show's featured artists, Brendan Dugan and Gray Bartlett, said they were no longer given work on the show after they questioned the business dealings of Trevor Spitz, the programme's producer, alleging that he favoured artists he personally represented. The subsequent investigation into the issue indicated a far-reaching possible change to the running of the BCNZ but also showed the government's reluctance, in spite of its low opinion of the corporation, to follow this advice.

The BCNZ made a substantial internal inquiry into the allegations.⁹¹ The results were never made public and, after his own investigation, the ombudsman agreed with the BCNZ decision not to release its report.⁹² As far as the government was concerned, the corporation had not done anything to rectify the problems in the light entertainment section so it resolved to hold a more formal and open investigation.⁹³

W. R. Jackson and M. R. Good, both chartered accountants, were appointed, with Jackson as chairman, as a commission of inquiry into 'contractual arrangements entered into by the BCNZ with its employees and into certain matters relating to advertising'. They made 24 separate recommendations, the first 20 specifying new procedures within the BCNZ. With minor modifications, these were all adopted immediately.⁹⁴ Recommendations 22 to 24 followed from recommendation 21 which proposed restructuring the corporation into a group of limited liability companies. The corporation took no action to implement this as it was a matter for the government to decide, but argued strongly against recommendation 21. Jackson and Good felt a limited liability company structure would give a tighter management control of broadcasting affairs. The BCNZ found the recommendation excessive and the inference that senior management were lax incorrect. 'It is significant that the commission did not find the decision to dismiss the artists to be wrong. Nor did it find any

impropriety. Yet it nonetheless finds fault in senior management for not being involved [despite the fact that they were] in an action that it did not find should not have been taken.' For the BCNZ, the recommendation was based on wrongly reached conclusions and was made without regard to the nature of a public broadcasting system and without proper appreciation of the implications of limited liability company status.⁹⁵

The reaction from the government was considerably more moderate than that of the commission of inquiry. Like the BCNZ, it was disturbed by the recommendation that the entire public broadcasting system be restructured. Light entertainment was one section of TVNZ which itself was one of six parts of the broadcasting corporation. The Cabinet ad hoc Committee on Broadcasting, chaired by the prime minister, found the commission of inquiry's investigation of the light entertainment section 'a very tiny peg on which to hang the whole question of restructuring'. The Cabinet committee wanted to know whether the problems found in the light entertainment section existed in other areas such as radio drama, the NZSO and the *Listener*. It suspected this was not necessarily the case since the light entertainment section in particular had developed along the lines of the Adam report which had advocated that creative people be given a major control in their areas of operation. The committee was not in favour of untrammelled creative control of production and administration and noted that such practices did not occur elsewhere in the corporation. It pointed to the television section at Dunedin and to Radio New Zealand, especially at regional levels, as well managed, efficient and effective. The committee did, however, feel hampered in its ability to investigate further, particularly by consulting within the corporation itself. The board was obviously not the body to ask about defects in the corporation's structure. Nor were the employees, whom the committee regarded as having a dual management and creative role. That left the chairman as the only person who could be consulted but this should be no more than 'a prudent courtesy'. The committee was left trusting that the commission of inquiry report, coupled with the advent of private sector television, might induce the corporation to put its house in order without any external persuasion. It felt private television was important: with the BCNZ television monopoly broken, both performers and technicians could obtain employment elsewhere, a matter that might improve the quality of management in the corporation.⁹⁶

The radical restructuring contained within the Jackson committee recommendations was prescient considering the moves made later in the decade by the fourth Labour government, but the lack of action taken by the Muldoon government showed that government's unwillingness to act decisively. Having begun its term by reversing the changes introduced by the Kirk administration, it remained at odds with the BCNZ. From that point, however, its response was one of punishment by neglect rather than any definite plan to remake publicly owned broadcasting.

ELECTION BROADCASTING

The Muldoon era coincided with a change in election campaigning in which broadcasting, particularly television, gained a domination that had been growing since the mid-1960s. In 1978 Whitehead voiced the then-acknowledged view when he argued that 'the entire concept of political campaigning has changed'.⁹⁷ Media impact had assumed a much higher emphasis. There were far fewer public meetings, once the major venue for campaigns, and those that were held were not well attended. In the new circumstances there was debate within the BCNZ over what should happen in the future. The strongest voice for change was that of Keith Hay, the corporation secretary, who suggested a fundamental shift in the corporation's stance.

Hay estimated that the National Party had spent \$250,000 in the 1975 campaign, mainly on advertising, and planned to increase that to \$300,000 in 1978. His figures for the Labour Party were \$97,000 in 1975, rising to \$150,000 in 1978. He saw no reason why some of this should not become broadcasting revenue. This would require a change in the political advertising rule which allowed only the date, time and place of meetings, together with speakers' names and an indication of the subject matter. Hay described 'the present rule as useful neither to the services nor the politicians' and agreed with McIntosh's 1975 assessment that much of the parties' use of their free time in that year's election was 'political advertising', indistinguishable from product commercials. But for Hay the answer was not to require political campaigning on radio and television to conform to the style of a now departed era; he suggested the choice was to allow or not allow political advertising. The clear implication was that, if it were allowed, political advertising would be charged for and the contents would not be specified beyond the normal advertising rules.⁹⁸

This view did not prevail. Instead the political parties were to be required to keep to the corporation's rules. A counter-suggestion, which also failed, was to increase the minimum time allowed for any one broadcast to five minutes, thus removing the short advertisements the Broadcasting Council had found so offensive in 1975. Eventually the allocation of free time to the political parties closely followed the allocation for 1975. National and Labour received the same total with a smaller but equal amount given to Social Credit and Values. Social Credit's total was increased, however, after representations from its leader, Bruce Beetham, following his success in a 1978 by-election and his party's rise in the public opinion polls. The party political television broadcasts were co-ordinated between the two channels so that they would not clash. The election night coverage was similar to that in 1975. RNZ gave the results on two networks. Geoff Robinson, with the expert comments of political scientists Professor Keith Jackson and Nigel Roberts, were on the National

Programme, while what was referred to as a 'less esoteric approach' was given on the commercial stations' *Tonight Show* by Sharon Crosbie with journalism educator Brian Priestley. As with previous elections, RNZ, best able to know the results quickly, accepted that it should assist the television channels. Again, as previously, most of the television coverage was on TV1.⁹⁹

Once more the broadcasting administrators had little success in orchestrating the parties' use of their broadcasting time. Again the parties made liberal use of short broadcasts, effectively commercials, rather than the longer, discussion-laden format advocated by the BCNZ. In 1978 Labour emulated National's 1975 example with its own commercials in questionable taste, notably one directed at National's 'economic miracle' featuring a robed figure failing to walk on water.

As ever, the broadcasting authorities were fastidious in their resolve not to be seen as partisan. The most publicly discussed requirement was one imposed on the satirical programme *A Week of It*. This was directed to have no political impersonations and characterisation in its last two shows of the year, which preceded the election. All the shows' writers other than David McPhail, who was also the producer, complained of the censorship but Allan Martin made it clear he would not broadcast anything that detracted from or assisted any candidate or policy.

Neutrality, however, was not entirely achieved in the 1978 election. Many broadcasters remained very supportive of the outgoing three-corporation structure and, because of that view, much opposed to the National government. Such an attitude was strongest at Avalon, an establishment Cross spoke of as 'ruined' by its 'hopeless enmeshment in politics'. By this he meant both union and national affairs, with attitudes to the National government of the day such that 'Avalon regarded itself as being the opposition'. Individual and private political views sometimes intruded into the performance of professional broadcasting duties. Cross refers to one instance of a live election-night programme featuring the prime minister in which a senior employee turned to a National Party MP and said, 'I hope to see that bastard out of office by the end of the night.' The comment was made during a commercial break and did not go to air though it did remain on the videotape.¹⁰⁰

Attitudes within the BCNZ were considerably less heated during the 1981 election and election coverage used the regular format. The corporation's view on paid political advertising was unchanged but by 1984 was more in tune with Keith Hay's opinion. It decided to make a fixed and equal amount of time on radio and television available for each party to purchase. Any time not bought would then be available for other parties to purchase. This, of course, gave an added incentive for parties to purchase the full amount of allocatable time for fear that any time not taken would be bought by their rivals. Before the 1984 election, however, the corpora-

tion asked the political parties for their comments on the issue. They were all opposed to any extension of paid political advertising on radio or television. The corporation accepted this agreement and, as before, determined that paid television advertisements could give only 'details of candidates' availability to call on electors, plus the address date and time of public meetings, the names and affiliations of speakers and a 'brief non-controversial indication' of the subject matter to be covered. Paid political advertising on radio was less restricted but still covered by 11 points outlined in a paper.¹⁰¹

The corporation continued to acknowledge that the allocation of free time was its role but it did offer six criteria for determining the allocation to the parties for discussion. The first two were the most important: previous voting support and current representation in Parliament. The four subsidiary criteria were that a party be nationwide, that it express policies on a range of issues over a period of time, that it field a sufficient number of candidates, and that other expressions of public support such as membership numbers and poll ratings be taken into account. A total of 115 minutes was given to both the National and Labour Parties, 80 to Social Credit and 50 to the New Zealand Party. A further condition was that the time could not be used in less than three-minute blocks. After complaints, candidates from two further parties, Values and Mana Motuhake, were given local RNZ coverage in the electorates in which they stood.¹⁰² Election-night commentators representing the viewpoints of the political parties had to be acceptable to the parties concerned.¹⁰³

The significant changes in coverage of the 1978, 1981 and 1984 elections were those that followed from broadcasting developments. Muldoon's election campaigns as prime minister coincided with changes in television technology that altered the coverage. The lighter, more mobile cameras that became available to the New Zealand news crews in the late 1970s meant broadcasters could put more emphasis on coverage of outside events such as politicians campaigning among crowds. News bulletin coverage during the election concentrated on pictures of events from that day; this had seldom been possible in the past. In the 1975 election the Values Party had opened its campaign with an afternoon rally in Auckland's Albert Park which was featured on that day's 6.30pm news. But that was exceptional. Only in the 1980s did such immediacy become commonplace and it led to a major innovation in the 1981 election. News reporters and camera crews accompanied the parties' leaders and their reports were the five-minute *Hustings Reports* presented nightly at the end of the 6.30 News and *News at Ten* bulletins.

This change increased in the 1980s as the lightweight cameras, at first film cameras, used videotape. In the 1981 election the filmed material had to be sent back to Avalon for editing. By the 1984 election it was possible to edit material on the road and so prepare it much more quickly for a

news broadcast. Such advances were greatly welcomed because this was a snap election which caught broadcasters unprepared. Usually broadcasters gave their full concern to politics on election day, but 14 July coincided with various pre-arranged events that required broadcasters' attention, including a rugby league test in Auckland and, in Christchurch, the recording of a *That's Country* programme for which overseas artists had been contracted. Such events could not be abandoned.

Fortunately in 1981 RNZ and TVNZ had introduced a combined results service that allowed results to be given more rapidly on television. This co-operation continued in 1984. Results were available quickly and by combining their resources, both could compensate for their smaller individual resources.

8

RECONSIDERING BROADCASTING

Unlike the first Labour government, elected as the country emerged from depression and into economic growth, the fourth, under David Lange, enjoyed no such fortune. In 1984 Labour was immediately faced with an economic crisis resulting from the Muldoon years and the turmoil of the change of government. The new administration began its term with a 20 per cent currency devaluation and never enjoyed a spending power approximating its policy needs. Broadcasting was one of many areas of government involvement to be radically reappraised.

Although he faded from political prominence, Muldoon remained a broadcasting personality in new areas of public performance. In 1985 he accepted a role as a head of a government department in the children's television series *Terry and the Gunrunners*. As the producer, Logan Brewer, explained, he was to 'dress down two incompetent investigators until they're quivering heaps. We couldn't think of anyone better than Sir Robert Muldoon.' Over the next years Muldoon made further such appearances, perhaps his most extraordinary being those on stage and television in *The Rocky Horror Show*.

BOARD AND EXECUTIVE CHANGES

Jonathan Hunt was appointed minister of broadcasting. Unlike most of his predecessors, Hunt was a senior politician with a long interest in broadcasting. He said he had been waiting for his 18 years as an MP for the job as minister and began his term with the announcement that there would be a Royal Commission on Broadcasting, the first on the topic in the country's history.

Labour's victory meant a change of broadcasting chairman. Cross, who had halted the third Labour government's broadcasting system, had spent much of his chairmanship opposing the aims of the Muldoon government but he was regarded within Labour as allied with that administration. Politically, his position was untenable. Lange had said that when Labour formed a government 'Cross is history'. Within the BCNZ, a change in chairman was anticipated so Cross's future with the corporation was dis-

cussed at his final meeting. Cross declared an interest and vacated the chair for the discussion. His colleagues resolved unanimously that if Cross were replaced as chairman they wished him to continue as chief executive.

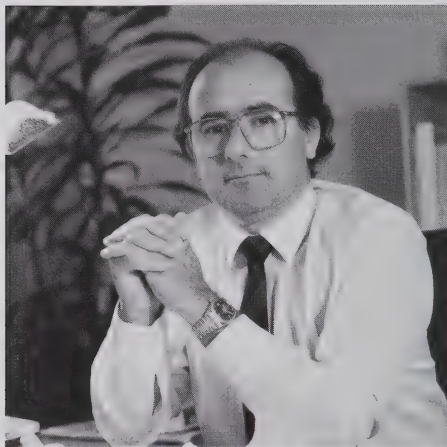
Ian Cross was replaced as BCNZ chairman by Hugh Rennie, a prominent Wellington lawyer. Rennie had a long involvement in media matters, starting in his university years when he edited the Victoria University student newspaper, *Salient*. He was one of the founders of the weekly *National Business Review*. At the time he was asked to be BCNZ chairman he was involved with United Broadcasters Ltd, then an applicant for a radio warrant to broadcast in the Kapiti Coast area. He ceased this involvement on accepting the position as BCNZ chairman.

As Rennie noted, 'the Labour government, broadly speaking, were not minded to renew the terms of anybody'.¹ Of the 1984 board only Richard Rowley continued to and beyond 1986. The widespread and rapid change in the control of what was both a public corporation and a considerable business meant a lack of continuity in the board's grasp of corporation affairs and effort was needed to achieve the necessary collective understanding. The first to go were I. D. Howell and G. M. Peters, replaced by Barbara Magner and Iain Gallaway. Gallaway was returning, having left the board in 1982 when Muldoon declined to renew a number of appointments. Four members, Ross, Morrison, Peebles and Martin, were replaced from 1 May 1985 by B. P. N. (Brian) Corban (who became deputy chairman), Katerina Mataira, S. G. (Tipene) O'Regan and J. B. Swinburn.

At his first meeting, Rennie was faced with the previous meeting's resolution concerning Cross. Cross could not continue as chief executive for, officially, he had not held that position, but Rennie considered an appointment was possible under the act. The board created a position of corporate chief executive and appointed Cross to it. Although no longer a board member, he continued to attend its meetings in his executive capacity.² The new situation did not last long and in 1985 there were considerable changes in personnel at both board and senior executive levels.

Cross wanted to retire on reaching the age of 60 and did so, leaving at the end of 1985. So ended the broadcasting career of the man who was not only a major broadcaster in his own right but also one of the most influential broadcasting administrators of the post-government department era. Outspoken to the end, Cross said broadcasting 'has suffered as no other public institution has in our history at the hands of confused and sometimes punitive legislators'.³

In a complete change of senior executives the heads of RNZ and TVNZ were also replaced. The RNZ change took place early in 1984 when Whitehead resigned to go to the ABC as its first managing director. His replacement as RNZ director-general was Beverley Wakem, appointed in February 1984.⁴ Wakem, the first woman to be given a director-generalship in New Zealand broadcasting, moved to the top position after a long



Julian Mounter. NZMA

career in RNZ. Beginning in 1963 as a talks and features producer and, in 1975, becoming the RNZ controller of programmes, she had considerable experience in both production and administration.

Allan Martin, the TVNZ director-general, also ended his long broadcasting career, though the May announcement of his retirement first involved an extension of his appointment to February 1986 to cover for the time it would take to find his successor. Martin's retirement, along with the earlier retirement of Alan Morris, meant the departure of two illustrious and highly important television broadcasters. Throughout their careers they were the only New Zealanders capable of filling their senior positions. Although there were many more senior and experienced New Zealanders in television broadcasting than when Morris and Martin had taken up their posts, the board decided there were now no New Zealanders capable of filling the very top positions. They wished to replace Cross and Martin with New Zealanders but in both cases decided no one suitable was available.⁵

Cross's successor, Australian Nigel Dick, attended his first board meeting in February 1986. He was joined the following month by Englishman Julian Mounter, the newly appointed TVNZ director-general. Dick spent many years with the Packer organisation before becoming managing director of Southern Cross Communications as well as a director of Crawford Productions. Mounter began his career as a newspaper reporter and later moved to television. He worked for London Weekend Television, Westward Television and Thames Television, gaining much production experience. In

1983 he joined the Thorn EMI Satellite and Cable Programmes Division where he was responsible for establishing and arranging the programme and production methods of three European channels.⁶ The board wanted people with a solid background in private commercial television and was reluctant to promote any of its BCNZ employees. Both Dick and Mounter qualified — ‘poachers turned gamekeepers’, the *Listener* called them.⁷ The primary consideration in their appointments was to prepare TVNZ for its impending competition with a third channel. Mounter’s satellite experience was also considered to be of particular relevance. As a consequence of these appointments, in April 1986 Monaghan was made TVNZ director of programmes and production.

LABOUR AND BROADCASTING POLICY

Rennie’s board operated for its first years with no clear understanding of the government’s broadcasting policy. A broadcasting board treads a narrow line, acting with independence while adhering to broad government policy that effectively sets the parameters within which it may act. When that policy is unclear, a board is not more free but, rather, lacks direction. Such uncertainty of policy had prevailed before. In 1982, after the new board was appointed, Muldoon appeared at the next monthly meeting, a constitutionally proper but unusual action. The board, not seeking specific orders but aware it was required to follow general government broadcasting policy, took the opportunity to ask the prime minister what the government wanted from the BCNZ. Muldoon chuckled but was unable to give a clear direction: according to one board member, he said, ‘Like all else we do it is seat-of-the-pants stuff.’⁸ Muldoon’s words came towards the end of his era; with the Lange government, the lack of definite broadcasting policy was an outcome of a new government seeking its path.

The board found it extremely difficult to plan ahead with no precise view of the political environment in which it was required to operate. In particular there was no government consensus as to the purpose of public broadcasting. Both directors-general lamented the lack of clear direction from the board but also accepted that this was impossible to expect in the prevailing political climate. Corban felt the lack of government direction, coupled with underfunding, was causing confusion and making the corporation a sitting target for political sniping. It was late 1987 before the government policy on broadcasting was determined and made clear to the BCNZ, though not the public. Until then, two distinct and contradictory possibilities for future policy were apparent. One, the ultimate victor, was part of a new understanding of the wider role of government, especially concerning its traditional business activities. That was unveiled in 1986 as the State-Owned Enterprises Act. The other was the work of the Royal Commission on Broadcasting and Related Telecommunications in New

Zealand. The commissioners were appointed in February 1985 and reported in September the following year.⁹

The commission was chaired by Professor Robert Chapman. His fellow commissioners were Judge M. J. A. (Mick) Brown, from the Auckland District Court, and L. A. Cameron and E. A. Nelson, company directors from Wellington and Auckland respectively. The commission was to report by 30 June 1986 but had three months added to its preparation time. The eventual political rejection of its recommendations stemmed from its report's lack of connection with the wider policy changes being introduced by the Lange government. The commission favoured the state continuing as both a commercial and non-commercial broadcaster. It also envisaged the broadcasting tribunal as an enlarged and permanent warrantor, regulator and monitor of the airwaves. The report supported and extended the traditional New Zealand system of predominantly publicly owned and highly regulated broadcasting media, but failed to defend it vigorously in the new user-pays climate of the mid-1980s. The commission dismissed too lightly the Treasury submission which advocated a lessening of central regulation in favour of a market-driven ethos. The commission failed to recognise this view as a fundamental government policy change rather than an aberrant view from one department.

The September report examined most of the conundrums of broadcasting history and offered some solutions. It repeated material from earlier broadcasting acts regarding alternative financing of the NZSO: it should remain under the BCNZ purview but be financed from a separate entitlement in the Internal Affairs vote. The suggestions for the broadcasting fee were new. Instead of being determined politically, the fee would be set at five-yearly intervals by an independent commission of review. In opposition to that view, Richard Prebble, appointed the following year as minister of broadcasting, argued that the licence fee was a tax and, as such, should be determined by elected officials. The commission also suggested that the fee become equivalent to the annual subscription to a metropolitan daily newspaper (around \$108 in 1986 against the actual fee of \$65 which the government had announced a month before). This offered an understandable comparison and gave an effective method of determining increases but the suggested amount was not generous, being well below the level then reigning in most countries. Nigel Dick pointed out the European range went from an equivalent of \$155 in France to \$295 in Denmark, with the British fee at \$169. Australia, which paid for public broadcasting out of direct taxation, took around \$130 per household.

Other problems remained unresolved. One of considerable importance both to the corporation and to the country's film industry was the conflicting position of TVNZ as both a programme producer and a purchaser of the works of independent producers. By the time Rennie's board was appointed, senior figures within TVNZ were disputing and changing the

corporation's long-standing antagonism towards the acceptance of independent productions. Rather than the original NZBC view that the great majority of New Zealand productions should be made within the corporation, by 1984 people such as Des Monaghan argued that the corporation could purchase local programmes more cheaply than it could make them itself and so should encourage the local industry. Although many TVNZ producers continued to feel otherwise, the board saw sense in Monaghan's view and, on the understanding that TVNZ would be purchasing more independent television productions, in 1985 the board allowed it to open a position of commissioning editor; the first appointee was Ruth Harley.¹⁰ This was the first unequivocal corporation decision indicating that independent production, long the pariah of New Zealand television, was now an integral part of its programming policy. The Royal Commission did not give a clear lead in the matter. While it exhorted TVNZ to extend its commissioning of independent productions, it also suggested that it expand its own productions. The report gave no guidelines about acceptable comparative levels for internal and independent production.

Nor did the commission give a definite recommendation about the desired level of local content, whether BCNZ or independently produced, on television. This was unfortunate. In difficult financial times the board was continually tempted to purchase what one member called 'top-flight overseas films' at a low price rather than pay a premium for New Zealand material. In 1987/88 the board's base level of activity for local programming was for \$3 million to be spent on TVNZ productions and \$1.5 million on independent productions. In 1988/89 this was halved to \$1.5 million and \$0.75 million respectively, with a consequent rise in overseas content.¹¹ The BCNZ board was able to make such changes in its purchasing policy because there was no requirement for any particular percentage of locally produced material.

Determining what is meant by local content is difficult. Along with defining who is a local, there are many further problems. There need to be distinctions between music performed and composed by New Zealanders. Judgements have to be made about the comparative worth of local programmes; otherwise any quota might be filled by, say, concentrating on games shows and neglecting drama. But such matters had been addressed in many countries and various solutions were available for New Zealand inspection. Many submissions to the commission advocated a local content quota for New Zealand broadcasters. The Arts Council saw the proportion of local content on radio as 'demonstrably inadequate' and called for a definite quota for locally produced music. Cross, in his submission, called for television quotas of 50 per cent for public television by 1988 and 35 per cent for any private channel within three years of launching.

The commission's recommendations regarding local content were for a 10 per cent quota on radio and the introduction of a points system on tele-

vision. The radio suggestion was new but only a slight increase on then current practice. In themselves, the deliberations of the commission brought the matter of quota to broadcasters' and general public attention. A 1986 survey found 8 per cent of music played on RNZ's commercial stations was of New Zealand origin and the overall average for all radio was 6 per cent. At the time there was a voluntary effort to lift that to 10 per cent.¹² Some stations already exceeded the recommendation and all student stations more than doubled it. In television, the level of local content had increased from 20 per cent to 1964 to 25 per cent in 1972 but had remained static since then. The commission's recommendation for television involved points being awarded for programming local content and the winning of points being a condition of holding a warrant. The number of points required varied with stations' financial situations and whether they were public or private, though no station would have an unfair or competitive advantage. There was no attempt to translate the points system into a definite quota. The commission's position regarding quota, particularly for television, was indecisive and not adopted by the government.

The commission's recommendations were at odds with the understanding of broadcasters. Many had lost much of their opposition to quotas, were prepared for them and were expecting a relatively high percentage quota suggestion from the commission. Before the report was released Wakem, from RNZ, felt the imposition of a quota of New Zealand-produced music was inevitable. She argued that the aim should be not to fight it but to make such a quota manageable and to get the record industry to produce playable records. Martin, from TVNZ, spoke favourably of Australia where he suggested the quota system had taught the television industry that local programmes could be successful and profitable and because the lesson had been learnt a quota was no longer necessary.¹³

In terms of its political acceptability and effects, the report was notable not for its main content but for an 18-page addendum from Cameron. The commission was dominated by its chairman and the addendum reflected this. Cameron, unlike the commission, accepted the Treasury submission that the frequency spectrum should be allocated by a competitive tendering system and that stations should broadcast according to the logic of the marketplace. He also advocated a basic change in the nature of New Zealand public broadcasting, calling for a full differentiation between commercial and non-commercial broadcasting. Cameron did not go so far as suggest the state had no right to be in commercial broadcasting but did say that, if it did so, such broadcasting should be fully commercial and run entirely separately from all activities funded via the licence fee. Cameron's was not a denial of public broadcasting but an argument that it should exclude commercial broadcasting. It was applied to both radio and television, including a suggestion that TV1, like the National and Concert Programmes, be non-commercial and dedicated solely to public service broadcasting.

The government's eventual response owed more to the addendum than to the report but was driven mainly by the vision embodied in its State-Owned Enterprises Act of 1986, which accentuated commercial over non-commercial objectives for all those state activities that came under the legislation, accompanied by a developing repudiation of the state's right to engage in commercial activity at all. Clause 4 was pivotal. It required all state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to be as profitable and efficient as comparable private businesses, to be good employees and to exhibit a sense of social responsibility when able to do so. The act indicated a major new orientation for government-owned trading organisations in which the paramount criterion became profitability. Fran Wilde, a government member on the administrative committee preparing the act, made it clear social responsibility did not have equal status with the principal objective.¹⁴ It was important but came third on the list of requirements.

The act rested uneasily with Labour's social policy history but it did reflect the government's current thinking. The Opposition regarded it as 'a flagship bill for Rogernomics', a reference to the economic policy of Roger Douglas, the minister of finance.¹⁵ During the passage of the act, broadcasting was not discussed as a potential SOE. Greater attention was focused on the deliberations of the Royal Commission. After the report was presented in September 1986 there was a hiatus until late 1987 when it became known that the SOE model, not the commission's view, would be followed. Even then there was further delay. In October 1987 Prebble, the SOE minister, when informing Rennie the BCNZ would become one or more SOEs, also told him broadcasting would be the last to get ministerial attention. Other soon-to-be-SOEs were more pressing. The details of the government's decision appeared in its review of broadcasting policy, conducted over the last weeks of 1987. Rennie described this as coming after five years of arrears of government action on policy.¹⁶ After the 1984 Labour election, the new board had three years of responsibility for a major public enterprise but without knowing whether its efforts would eventually be supported or overturned. The final government decision was a remaking of broadcasting on a scale analogous to the two previous major changes, those introduced by the 1936 and 1961 Broadcasting Acts.

THE CAVALIERS

The first major crisis faced by Dick and Mounter after their appointments concerned the broadcasting of rugby matches between New Zealand and South Africa. In 1985 the NZRFU planned an All Black tour of South Africa. Visiting the country of apartheid was always contentious and in 1985 was made more so by events in South Africa and by the dissension within New Zealand remaining from the 1981 tour. In May 1985 the board discussed the proposed tour. None of the traditional sponsors

wished to be associated with it but, in spite of that, the board established that full coverage of all games would be available on radio and nine matches would be televised. It was argued and accepted, in opposition to previous practice, that a genuine news and current affairs journalist should accompany the sports team journalists. Wakem expected that the RNZ editor of news and current affairs would go.¹⁷ In the event the tour was abandoned after a High Court injunction prevented the team's departure.

The following year an unofficial team, the Cavaliers, including the majority of players selected in 1985, toured South Africa without NZRFU authorisation and to the considerable disquiet of the New Zealand government. Arrangements were made in secret and the team had left New Zealand before the public or most authorities knew a tour was about to take place. TVNZ was soon asked about arrangements for televising the matches at which point Mounter announced that the tour and surrounding events would be covered in news bulletins but that there would be no telecasts of any matches. Wakem, speaking for RNZ, followed suit; there would be no radio commentaries either. The decision was endorsed first by Nigel Dick as chief executive and then by Rennie speaking for the board.

The decision was hotly contested. A delegation of television journalists met Dick, arguing that the non-coverage decision should be reversed. He, backed by the board's unanimous support, was unmoved.¹⁸ Complaints were made to the Broadcasting Tribunal but to no avail, Slane, the chairman, judging that the tribunal had no power to deal with complaints about non-existent programmes the BCNZ had no intention of filming or screening.¹⁹ Formal complaints were also made to the BCNZ, including one from Judy McGregor, editor of the *Sunday News*, who argued that a significant number of New Zealanders wanted live coverage of matches. Her paper ran a large 'Go Home Julian' headline and contended that Mounter had let the public down and forgotten the fundamental principle of journalism. Ian Cross was one journalist and broadcaster who agreed.²⁰ Three senior members of the Opposition, Sir Robert Muldoon, John Banks and R. J. (Jim) Gerard, met Rennie and Mounter to complain about 'a bad, wrong decision bringing in a political element'.²¹ They also contended that the unofficial nature of the tour did not affect the public interest: tens of thousands wanted to see the matches and the corporation was failing in its public duty.

The matter was never put to the test of viewing statistics but there is little doubt the complainants were correctly representing a significant number of New Zealanders. Equally, a significant number strongly opposed the Cavaliers' tour and supported the corporation's decision. Not the least of the reasons for not televising a rebel tour of South Africa were logistical. With a touring team leaving suddenly and secretly, no pre-tour telecast planning was possible and Rennie argued it was doubtful whether the BCNZ would have been able to telecast the matches.²² Any such difficul-

ties did not apply to RNZ which could have taken a sound feed from South Africa to bring radio commentaries of games. But broadcasting difficulties were not the announced reason for the lack of coverage. Rennie's statement, supporting his television director-general, held that, on normal considerations, an unofficial tour would not warrant coverage. It ignored the question of how normal this tour was — a team from the country's premier sport playing the country's main rival and including the country's acknowledged best players. Rennie stated that the corporation would not validate or encourage an unauthorised event. 'The corporation has a clear duty in the public interest to respect the New Zealand and international structure of organised amateur rugby.' Neither the NZRFU nor any of its regional unions requested broadcasting coverage of the tour. According to the anecdotal evidence, they were glad of the BCNZ decision. But the unusual reading of the corporation's statutory duties left the strong suspicion that Mounter and Wakem, supported by their superiors, had determined that the matter was a question of morality rather than of the programming interests of a significant percentage of the New Zealand population. The corporation came to an ethical decision and chose the anti-apartheid side, but its actions did repudiate the 'publish and be damned' school of journalism and broadcasting.²³

BCNZ AND TVNZ ENTERPRISES

The decision about the Cavaliers' tour showed the BCNZ accepting the right to refrain from broadcasting. The corporation was also required to decide on issues that extended the rights of a public broadcaster. One of the first was the right to engage in commercial activity that was not strictly to do with broadcasting. It was an important and practical issue because the corporation's activities, particularly much of its television programming, presented many merchandising opportunities. The issue was not new — the matter of principle had been determined by Cross's board — but a practical resolution was still to be made.

While he was editor of the *Listener*, Cross argued to the Broadcasting Council that the magazine should develop wide functions on behalf of the council by way of separate publications for specific purposes, perhaps at quarterly intervals. Little came of this because the council doubted whether, as the owner of the *Listener*, it was entitled to extend the magazine's activities. When he became the inaugural BCNZ chairman, Jarden said that the corporation should not get involved in areas that were clearly the prerogative of private enterprise. He also felt, however, that the new act allowed flexibility and offered scope for joint productions with private enterprise.²⁴

The debate was advanced by the unilateral action of TVNZ which started TVNZ Enterprises, headed by Maurice Smyth. One of the NZBC originals, Smyth was a Belfast journalist who migrated to New Zealand to

join the new corporation's news service, only to find he was too early; instead he became public relations officer with the New Zealand Police for a year. Starting with the NZBC as a news reporter he gradually moved behind the cameras, producing various programmes, including *Town and Around* in Wellington and Auckland and *Graphline*, which endeavoured to do for industry what *Country Calendar* had done for agriculture. He joined the sales and marketing section of the corporation and was Auckland head of presentations, promotion and public relations before starting TVNZ Enterprises in 1980. Smyth described his new task as to identify and find not the primary dollar but the extra dollar from spin-off activities. There were two distinct areas. One was selling TVNZ productions to other broadcasters around the world, effectively a reorganisation of the existing programme sales department. The other was moving into new income-generating areas such as book publishing, facilities hire, video cassette sales and other merchandising.²⁵ There were dangers in both areas. The former carried risk for TVNZ production since the desire for overseas sales always risked slanting production values away from their primary orientation towards the New Zealand audience. The latter required steps into new areas of business opportunity and risk in which TVNZ had little experience.

In spite of the lead given by TVNZ, the corporation debated whether it should be involved in wider enterprises and doubted that it had the authority to be in the business of publication. The secretary, however, argued that this was allowed in the act. The board accepted this view and in 1984 took over TVNZ Enterprises and centralised all corporation merchandising in a renamed BCNZ Enterprises, with Smyth as its general manager. The concept, not original, was modelled on BBC Enterprises. An early and profitable example of the nature of the commercial activities promoted by BCNZ Enterprises was a national tour of *Glide Time*, a play by Roger Hall which had been developed into a highly popular television series.

Rennie's board accepted it had the authority to extend its commercial activity and was concerned more with accentuating its profitability than debating its propriety. There were difficulties. The overwhelming majority of commercially fruitful enterprises came from television, but the taking over of TVNZ Enterprises backfired. TVNZ lost enthusiasm for such activity once its own subsidiary was submerged in BCNZ Enterprises so, to restore enthusiasm and financial success, the board dissolved BCNZ Enterprises from 1 April 1986 and reintroduced TVNZ Enterprises. The other BCNZ areas, RNZ, the *Listener*, the NZSO and Resource Services, were left to conduct their own commercial activities independently.²⁶

TVNZ Enterprises was a profitable subsidiary with international sales of programmes forming the largest share of its income. Many of the new ventures, however, brought fresh uncertainty, as was illustrated by the saga of *RTR Countdown*, a monthly magazine introduced in 1987 in close association with the TVNZ programme *Ready to Roll*. *RTR Countdown* was a

New Zealand version of an Australian original. The BCNZ paid an establishment fee of \$15,000 plus 7 per cent of the net proceeds from sales and advertising to the Australian publishers, Fairfax Magazines and Owfese Publishers, for the provision of editorial style, format and content. The aim was not only to make extra income through the magazine but also to secure audience loyalty to the programme. The board saw possibilities of future similar associations between magazines and ZM radio. The board anticipated a surplus of \$256,000 after 18 issues of *RTR Countdown* but had misjudged the market. The following year approval was given to continue the publication at least until March 1989, provided accumulated losses of no more than \$325,000 were incurred. The losses continued to mount and in August the loss limit was raised to \$350,000 to allow publication to continue to October 1988. The companion television programme, *Ready to Roll*, was the clear leader in its field and Mounter wanted the publication to be continued as a matter of strategy for TVNZ. But in October the board decided the accumulated losses were enough and voted to end publication after the December 1988 issue.²⁷

LISTENER

The *Listener*, too, required new entrepreneurial activity and attitudes in the 1980s in response to the loss of its monopoly over advance programme information. The circulation suffered. In August 1983 David Beatson was appointed editor and emphasised that the magazine must respond to its new competitive environment. Other publications were produced, Beatson reporting to the board in December 1983 on how well the book *Stockman Country* was selling. Beatson's aim was to return to the levels of profitability of 1978/79 but this worried board members who exhorted him, in his development plans, not to allow the *Listener* to be so carried away by commercial considerations and the pursuit of profitability as to lose its traditional character of a quality periodical making a major contribution to the literary and cultural life of the country.²⁸ This was both the strength and the weakness of the *Listener*. Many were satisfied with, indeed loyal to, its quality character. Many others had bought the magazine only because of its programme listings and were happy to change when these were offered by an alternative of a different style.

Cue, a competitor to the *Listener*, began publication in September 1984. It was a well-produced magazine that, like the *Listener*, gave details of television schedules one week in advance. Edited by Phil Gifford and published by Strathmore Publishing Ltd, *Cue* had various well-known columnists, including the television interviewer Ian Fraser and Rosemary McLeod, much of whose high public profile had been gained on the *Listener*. Although *Cue* folded during 1985 it gave notice that the *Listener* now operated in a competitive environment. The *Listener* began 1985

with a loss in the first month, a matter Beatson put down to competition from *Cue*. Cross, however, thought the main competitive impact had come from the weekly newspaper, *Truth*, a view that seemed correct as, even after *Cue* folded, the *Listener* difficulties continued, with a further downward trend in sales during the year. The BCNZ made more by selling programme information to other publications than it lost through the drop in *Listener* circulation,²⁹ but this was little consolation for the magazine.

In April 1987 Beatson reported sales down 6 per cent though this was not as bad as the reported 13 per cent decline in magazine sales generally. In spite of that, magazine publication was the growth area in New Zealand journalism, with a 45 per cent increase in the number of titles published during the previous five years. This included a number of magazines taking advantage of the public interest in radio and, especially, television programmes and personalities. Although Rennie's board did not repeat its predecessor's advice to Beatson about not getting carried away by commercial considerations, the *Listener* management did not grasp the opportunity to itself introduce a low-budget alternative and, from 1986, faced increased competition when Independent News Ltd started the successful *TV Guide*. This began as a supplement to the weekly *Truth* but was soon sold as a separate publication. By March 1987 it had a circulation of 70,000.

With a continuing decline in circulation, there were changes in the *Listener*'s management in mid-1987. During the 1980s the *Listener* became not a single publication but the centre of a substantial division within the BCNZ. The *Listener* editors had been required to be in charge of all the activities in the division, a matter that Nigel Dick suggested partly explained not only the continuing drop in *Listener* circulation but also why the average tenure of editors since 1969 had been no more than three years. Dick considered the editor had too many concerns and could not give them all proper attention. He recommended to the board that David Beatson be redesignated as managing editor and that Dick and Beatson together recruit and appoint a suitable editor. He strongly suggested that this person should be Peter Stewart, Beatson's predecessor and the man whose editorship had seen the *Listener* at its highest circulation level. Stewart was eager to return, especially to a redesigned position concerned solely with the publication of the magazine. Stewart was appointed and took up the editorship in December 1987.³⁰ The change brought a new entrepreneurial attitude. Neil Rowe was appointed business manager and over the next years Beatson and he produced a variety of publications, most of them profitable although some had only a tenuous relationship to broadcasting.³¹

TELETEXT

Along with new entrepreneurial attitudes, the BCNZ taken over by Rennie and his board was required to develop a different understanding of the

nature of broadcasting. New applications for broadcasting technology multiplied in the 1980s. The BCNZ's first use of this was teletext, text displayed on a television screen. Cross's board agreed in December 1982 that teletext should be developed in New Zealand. This was done in Christchurch and teletext was available on screen from 1 February 1984. Developed from BBC work done in the 1970s when the aim was to provide subtitles for foreign language programmes or to aid the deaf, by the time teletext was started in New Zealand it was a separate programme in its own right, giving news and sports details, various information from share prices to racing results, and also a system of programme subtitling for the deaf and other specialist information for the disabled. To receive teletext, television sets must have additional integrated circuitry capable of storing and decoding the signals. Viewers must either adapt their existing sets or buy new teletext sets.

The BCNZ had been in no hurry to develop teletext. Other than the initial cost of a suitable set, the service is effectively free. As Cross noted in 1980, 'We have no way of charging for it.' Cross suggested it be seen as part of the service provided for the licence fee.³² In the circumstances teletext had waited in the priority queue behind such things as the extension of the TV2 coverage. Once it began, however, various commercial possibilities were found and in 1985 a Wellington sales office was opened to take advantage of the expanding interest. In that year the most significant commercial use of teletext came in a contract signed with the Totalisator Agency Board, resulting in a computer-to-computer service providing instant racing information via teletext. By the mid-1980s it was accepted that teletext was capable of considerable development. Increases in display definition opened various possibilities. Ian Richards, the TVNZ executive responsible for teletext, gave the example of 'a specialised regional real estate segment . . . where people looking for houses can see specialist pages showing high definition pictures of the interiors of houses for sale'. Early in 1985 the board accepted there should be diversification into the supply of specialist news and information services for private operators on the grounds that teletext, and related technologies such as videotext, might become significant revenue earners.³³

Such possibilities altered the understanding of broadcasting as a quest for the largest possible audience. The New Zealand opening of teletext, with its specialist pages for the disabled, was regarded as the first time that 'public service broadcasting has worked with a fraction of the community it serves'.³⁴ Teletext, however, was, in retrospect, a relatively minor change in broadcasting practice. What beckoned was a prospective integration of broadcasting technology with many of the traditional forms of business and individual communication. In the 1980s such prospects were greatly enhanced by the developing capabilities of computers and the newly available technology of fibre optic cable. These, linked with broadcasting tech-

nology, integrated the previously distinct arenas of telecommunications and broadcasting and introduced practicable communication abilities unthought of by earlier broadcasters. The further development of the new technologies offered not only enhanced capabilities for public service but also considerable commercial opportunities.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The reconsideration of broadcasting involved a revival of advisory committees, groups of citizens selected to give the corporation some insight into the public's view of its activities. As soon as he became chairman, Rennie told the board the minister required these committees and the corporation had to decide whether the minister would set them up to advise him or whether the BCNZ would set them up to advise itself. In either case, the costs were to be met by the corporation. The corporation chose the second option and made genuine efforts to establish competent and well-served committees. In all six were instituted, one more than in the original announcement, based in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. These regions both reflected the changed demography of New Zealand and included the country's university towns.³⁵

Like their predecessors, the advisory committees of the mid- and late 1980s were neither elected by nor genuinely representative of the public. Their deliberations tended to follow the interests of their members, especially when it came to radio. Although the committees concentrated their deliberations on television, when they did discuss radio they considered the National and Concert Programmes; the higher audience commercial radio, whether RNZ or private, largely escaped their attention. As had happened in the past, well-intentioned citizens gave considerable attention to broadcasting matters but became dispirited by what they saw as a lack of interest in their work. When John Tiffin, chair of the Wellington regional advisory committee, was invited to meet the board he spoke of the pride his members had in New Zealand broadcasting but also of their concern over media violence and the low levels of New Zealand content and Maori participation. He was also worried that so little notice was taken of advisory committee comment and advocated a stronger working relationship between the board and the committees. Jane Ritchie, meeting the board in 1987 as chair of the Waikato committee, echoed the anxiety about lack of consultation. She gave two recent board decisions, the proposed changes in alcohol advertising and the entry of advertising to the *Sports Roundup* programme, as examples of changes about which the committees had not been asked.³⁶

The board gave more attention to its advisory committees than most of its predecessors. Committee reports were presented and discussed regularly, and members' advice was sought on various matters. For instance,

they were commended for the way in which they looked ahead to social issues. The trouble was that the advisory committees were just that, advisory, and that their recommendations on most topics were entirely predictable. The board knew, for example, that the committees were always against an increase in advertising but also considered they failed to understand the financial situation in which broadcasting endeavoured to survive and the need to increase revenue. The board was, however, convinced of the need for advisory committees and tried to retain them in the face of the government's eventual changes to the structure of public broadcasting. In February 1988 the board ratified a revised constitution for the committees and later that year, as the BCNZ prepared to go out of existence, it told the minister that some form of public consultation was an essential part of public broadcasting and that both Corban and Rowley, as incoming chairmen of the new SOEs, intended to continue a system of setting up their own advisory committees.³⁷

VIOLENCE AND TELEVISION

Violence on television was a particular problem for the committees. It had become a matter of public concern and was addressed by the board. Violence has always been a controversial issue, not only in broadcasting but in most public presentations, whether novels, plays and television series or news and current affairs. Television, with sight as well as sound, and as a day-to-day presence in the home, added a new intensity to the topic. Were continual and regularly vivid portrayals of violent action acceptable viewing? The heart of the concern was the possibility that violent behaviour on television would lead to violent behaviour among viewers, particularly the young.

Programme purchasers had always known that violence in television programmes needed careful consideration, but there was no formal policy; it was left to the purchasers' and the corporation censors' discretion. Alf Dick has spoken of the way this was applied in the early 1960s. In one episode of *The Larkins*, a comedy series, the boy, shy and retiring, was asked by his mother to bring home some friends. 'Of course they turn out to be bikies with bike chains and knuckle dusters . . . which things are prohibited in New Zealand. . . . By the time we cut that out there was no episode left.' As a result the entire episode was not screened. Later, in a *William Tell* episode, Tell was 'flaying around a length of drawbridge chain'. This was allowed since 'anyone can pick up bike chain but drawbridge chain is damned hard to get hold of these days'. For Dick and his colleagues context was all. 'It was all right in a western for an Indian to have a tomahawk but in a modern setting for a chap to go out to the woodheap, pick up an axe and carve his wife up, that was out. Domestic weapons, bottles, scissors, a woodheap axe were prohibited.'³⁸

It was not until the late 1970s that the topic given formal consideration, though to no real effect. A. G. Paterson, head of programme standards, noted in 1977 that there was growing pressure regarding television violence in the United States from teaching and medical associations and in Britain the Annan report had canvassed the topic at some length. The forward-looking Paterson considered the New Zealand public would soon be looking to the corporation for a policy on television violence, particularly in programme purchasing, and thought it 'timely for the corporation to formulate its views on the problem'.³⁹ In 1978 the matter came before the Parliamentary Select Committee on Violent Offending, where Cross argued that television made people aware of but was not a cause of violence. Others gave stronger views with the Law Society contending that though the viewing of television violence did not itself cause violent offending, it showed children that violence is normal.

Corporation officials began to show concern only during the 1980s. In 1983 members of the board questioned violent aspects of news broadcasts and what they saw as an unnecessary inclusion of items that would offend some people and upset young viewers.⁴⁰ That year the Mental Health Foundation reported on violence on television and listed a number of programmes, all of which the board decided to review. Peter Fabian prepared a response to the report which the board received but did not publicise. The board replied, but not to the foundation's satisfaction. The board was reluctant to surrender any of its autonomy and the foundation was unhappy that the BCNZ refused to accept it as an official advisory body to monitor violence in programmes.⁴¹ The board's most public action was unusual and was not repeated: in 1984 the afternoon soap operas were dropped from scheduling during the August school holidays because of their 'excessive violence'.⁴²

The board addressed the topic anew when Julian Mounter was appointed. Mounter felt TVNZ programming included material which, because of its violent content, would not be acceptable on British television. The board had no intention of banning violence entirely — it was a current reality and therefore had a proper place in programmes — but it did not want to ignore public concern over the amount of violence shown on television. It asked the senior corporation executives to consider how the BCNZ might initiate a full and authoritative investigation into the topic, but this was merely moving into an area that had bedevilled other authorities for decades and no research was undertaken. But the board also asked Mounter and Monaghan to take action and they began reducing the amount of violent programming, for which they were congratulated and thanked by the board.⁴³

Ultimately, however, there has been no unique New Zealand solution to the problem of television violence. Broadcasters receive no clear guide from the community: screen violence receives as much support as it does

condemnation. And because so much New Zealand television content is imported from other countries, the level of violence is largely beyond local control, other than by deciding not to purchase at all. The Mounter-led reduction of violent content did not continue and, besides, was never accepted as enough by anti-violence groups. Nor has there been a consensus about the influence of violence on audiences.

RNZ AND THE BROADCASTING TRIBUNAL

Rennie's board had a similar relationship with the Broadcasting Tribunal to that of its predecessor: it was required to plan for future broadcasting when much decision-making power lay with the tribunal and it did not know how that power would be exercised. Many corporation actions were made in an attempt to anticipate and placate an unpredictable tribunal. For radio, the board wanted to begin FM transmissions with those stations concentrating on music. In particular it wished to convert the Concert Programme to FM, along with the ZM stations which it wanted joined in a FM network. The board then intended to redirect its AM stations. The AM transmitters released by the Concert Programme change to FM would be available for the parliamentary broadcasts and for a sports network. The AM transmitters released by the ZM conversion to FM would be retitled 1YB, 2YB and 3YB and be available for proposed ethnic/access stations in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. RNZ saw Maori programming as a significant priority and 1YB as its vehicle for the Auckland area. But though the board had approved 1YB this was not at the cost of providing a transmitter: 1YB would use the 1ZM AM transmitter if and when 1ZM moved to FM. Similarly, in Wellington, 2YB could start on the 2ZM AM transmitter once 2ZM converted to FM. The YB stations would be separate stations but with occasional links. All this, however, had to wait on not only the tribunal's rulings but also on the High Court's decisions on the consequent inevitable appeals.

In its first months Rennie's board was faced with a tribunal rejection of its predecessor's application for advertising on the Concert Programme. The decision not only disallowed advertising, costing RNZ an estimated \$400,000 per year, but also restricted the Concert Programme format to such an extent that Wakem considered it precluded significant changes to any degree. The board deferred any consideration of the programme's future until the minister was advised and gave his own views of any steps he might take.⁴⁴ At the same time the minister was approached regarding the Auckland-based 1ZM and the tribunal's refusal to allow it to convert to FM or to release it from the requirement that it be non-commercial. While it remained an AM station Wakem said it was 'simply surviving'; if it were allowed to change to FM she expected it to attract at least 14 per cent of the Auckland audience. This station was the major element in the pro-

posed FM-ZM network and a loosening of the tribunal noose was necessary if that network were to be commercially viable.⁴⁵ Both appeals to the minister were fruitless.

By December, with no lead from the minister, Wakem argued that the proposal for a Concert Programme network should be halted unless there was either a licence fee increase or some other government financial commitment to public service broadcasting. With no fee increase and with advertising rejected, RNZ put the networking and conversion to FM of the Concert Programme low on its list of priorities. Yet it recognised an obligation to the programme in terms of its public service responsibilities and had also assured the tribunal that spending \$500,000 on it was acceptable. The result was a change in the RNZ planning for all of its non-commercial broadcasts except the National Programme. The new approach was to link its proposals for its commercial and non-commercial stations. The board resolved to apply yet again for an increase in the licence fee, with a further proposal that it be called a broadcasting fee. But, in the meantime and while licence fee funding was frozen, it also resolved that non-commercial expansion could occur only in association either with new commercial radio opportunities or by sponsor funding. The tribunal had ruled the latter out of order for the Concert Programme and the board saw it as applicable to Maori, Polynesian and access radio, which would go ahead only with this financial help. The Concert Programme's conversion to FM could occur only in tandem with the granting of ZM FM warrants for the same sites. The other form of non-commercial development under discussion, the extension of the parliamentary coverage, would be allowed only if the government provided funding.⁴⁶

The minister finally gave a policy lead in August 1985: there would be neither advertising nor sponsorship on the Concert Programme but 1ZM would once again operate as a fully commercial station. He directed the corporation to apply for FM warrants for the ZM stations and the Concert Programme. He also asked the corporation, once the Concert Programme moved to FM, to continue to use the YC-AM stations for broadcasting Parliament and sports and to add to that educational programmes, programmes to cater for the interests of cultural and ethnic minorities and other public interest programmes. Accordingly, the board made a number of applications to the tribunal: for three networks, the Concert Programme on FM, a new network on what would become the ex-YC AM transmitters and a ZM-FM network that included 1ZM converting to FM and being fully recommercialised.⁴⁷ The two proposed FM networks involved not only conversion of existing stations but extensions of the networks into new areas. New Concert Programme stations would, as with the existing stations, broadcast a programme originating from Wellington. New ZM stations were to be relay stations based on the closest ZM station. In November 1984 application had been made for warrants for relay stations

in Nelson, the Manawatu and New Plymouth, all based on 2ZM. The 1985 applications were for further regional stations, again linked to the appropriate metropolitan ZM station.

Since the applications were based on ministerial direction, the board made them with considerable confidence. But though the minister could direct the BCNZ, he could not direct the tribunal, a judicial body, and his policy did not win automatic acceptance, as was shown by the fate of 1ZM. The minister had said that government policy had changed so that 1ZM should be both fully commercial and broadcast in FM. Although the tribunal was now ready to consider the matter, it was thwarted when a High Court injunction restrained it from hearing the 1ZM application without hearing all other applications at the same time.⁴⁸

The corporation's linking of commercial and non-commercial developments had only limited success. The tribunal never accepted the link. Nor would it give a blanket permission for new networks and instead continued to deal only with applications for individual city-based warrants; the corporation had to compete for these along with other private applicants. The tribunal did, however, call for applications for other commercial FM warrants in Auckland, Palmerston North, Wellington, Nelson and Christchurch and therefore did consider the corporation's FM applications for its ZM stations in those cities. All applications were slowed, not only by the tribunal's procedures but also by various court actions. The corporation was successful in Palmerston North, Wellington and Christchurch but in all cases faced further delays as appeals were lodged.

The first of the ZM stations to transmit in FM was 2ZM. It opened in December 1985 and was followed the following year by Palmerston North's station in March and 3ZM in Christchurch in May. The Palmerston North station produced its own breakfast show but for most of its transmissions merely slotted its own commercials into a programme originating from 2ZM.

The Concert Programme was also converted to FM, not with a single network warrant as the corporation wanted, but in response to individual applications for the separate stations. The first, in 1985, were for the youngest of the Concert programme stations, those in the Waikato and Hawke's Bay. These were followed in 1986 by Wellington and Christchurch and in 1987 by Manawatu. There were no further extensions until the 1988–89 year when Taupo, Nelson and Taranaki all joined the Concert Programme with FM transmission.

Dunedin and Auckland were absent from the conversions to FM for Concert Programme and ZM stations. Dunedin was not in the corporation plans for change but Auckland was the notable absentee and a major casualty of the difficult relationship between tribunal and corporation. The corporation's linking of Concert Programme and ZM networks' conversions to FM, along with the tribunal's lack of permission for 1ZM to either

convert to FM or become fully commercial, meant a stalemate in Auckland public radio. Eventually the corporation gave way and rescinded its tandem policy in April 1987 after public, political and tribunal criticism over the failure to provide FM for the Concert Programme in Auckland. With the 1ZM situation not likely to be resolved in the foreseeable future, the board abandoned the linking of the two programmes, ZM and Concert, and sought an FM frequency for its Auckland Concert Programme station.⁴⁹ But there was no resolution for either of the Auckland stations during the era of the corporation. At the final meeting of the BCNZ, more rejections from the tribunal were reported and Wakem noted that relations between the two were 'destined to go out in a bath of blood'.⁵⁰

The difficulties for the ZM stations were acute. With Auckland's 1ZM still excluded both from FM and from being a full commercial station, a yawning chasm prevented the stations from becoming a national network. The two other ZM stations were converted to FM but only one further station was added, in Palmerston North. The tribunal declined the application for a further ZM-FM station in Nelson and RNZ was unable to open there or in other smaller centres. The three ZM-FM stations allowed RNZ to compete with the private FM stations by playing popular music with the high fidelity made possible by the new transmission system. But three stations gave only a limited coverage and RNZ was unable to develop its ZM-FM network concept on anything like the scale it had intended.

The start of FM meant further changes in AM transmission. *Sports Roundup* started, broadcasting on the YC AM transmitters vacated by the Concert Programme. Although it was not the beginning of a fully dedicated sports programme, since it did not broadcast throughout the year and shared the transmitter with other programmes, notably the broadcasts from Parliament, it was the beginning of a new network and also the entry of advertising into what had previously been non-commercial transmitters. In 1982 the tribunal had refused permission for advertising to accompany sports commentaries but, in 1987, it allowed the corporation's application not only for *Sports Roundup* to exist but for it to include advertising. Although initial approval was only for a 24-week period, it was the start of what effectively became another commercial network.⁵¹ The corporation, in its 1988 final report, lamented that the new network 'has not yet fully developed, as it has been operating only under month-by-month Tribunal authorisations', but RNZ did make significant progress. Although the tribunal strictures meant insecurity for the continuing existence of *Sports Roundup*, RNZ did act on the correct assumption that the network would continue. It developed an ability to cover live a full range of sports, both in New Zealand and overseas. *Sports Roundup* faced a largely unchallengeable competition from television in coverage of major events but for commentaries and reporting on the breadth of sporting activities the network was out on its own.

For the existing and continuing AM stations, the introduction of FM forced format changes. Unable to compete with FM stations in the sound quality, the stations abandoned their previous reliance on music and introduced an emphasis on the spoken word. RNZ's *Tonight Show* on the commercial network became much more involved in interviews and talkback, which kept the audience, though it was an older one; the younger listeners had moved to the FM stations. There were also major changes in the commercial stations' breakfast sessions, especially in Auckland. There, with the advent of FM, the audience rating for 1ZB dropped from 30 per cent to a low of 6 per cent when its popular breakfast session host, Merv Smith, left to join Radio i. Changes were made and in March 1987 a news-talk format was introduced with Paul Holmes, from 2ZB, as breakfast session host. Holmes referred to the session as 'a morning tabloid' as opposed to National Radio's *Morning Report*, which was disparagingly regarded as 'worthy and dull'.⁵² This new identity for 1ZB put it in direct competition with Radio Pacific, which now saw its further development checked. There was little immediate change in audience rating, but the corporation decided there was no alternative to 1ZB's new format. With five of the seven Auckland stations having a music format there was, Nigel Dick argued, no niche for a sixth to fall into, and, broadcasting on AM, 1ZB could not hope to compete as a music station. A news-talk format had been successful in both the United States and Australia so there were good grounds for believing it would be the most successful format in AM competition. The new format eventually succeeded and one piece of good news at the BCNZ final meeting was that 1ZB was back in first place in Auckland's AM market.⁵³

There were also changes on RNZ's main non-commercial network. After 21 years, in 1985 the National Programme became National Radio. The most obvious programming alteration came in January 1986 when the 7am to 8am *Morning Report* became a three-hour 6am to 9am *Good Morning New Zealand*. While some format changes were intended, including the playing of only New Zealand music, the *Morning Report* style prevailed, bringing the network three hours of broadcasting journalism Monday to Friday. Otherwise the changes were small and gradual, what the *Listener* called 'a cautious tuck-and-fold for the venerable lady'.⁵⁴ This did disguise a new orientation as personnel from RNZ's commercial stations moved to positions of authority in National Radio. Previously the movement of announcers, such as Sharon Crosbie and Wayne Mowat, from RNZ's commercial to non-commercial stations had brought much public comment, along with complaints of 'poaching' from the commercial stations' executives. Now, less discussed publicly though of at least equal significance, executives also moved. In 1985 Errol Pike was appointed manager of National Radio and Ross McGavin the network's programme director. Both came from RNZ's commercial service. Their



Maggie Barry and Kim Hill of RNZ's *Good Morning New Zealand*. *EVENING POST*

main innovation was in audience research as they brought to National Radio the techniques they had learnt on the commercial stations. A target audience was defined as that older group of listeners interested in the middle ground between the Concert Programme and commercial pop radio. That audience was surveyed and its preferences determined programming changes. As McGavin noted, 'All the changes we are putting into place now are desirable to a majority of the audience.'⁵⁵ Such changes did help the network to maintain its audience but called into question some of its public broadcasting commitments, particularly those to minority programming, which from this point were increasingly regarded as the province of access radio.

ACCESS RADIO

RNZ's desire to economise forced access radio into a new form. The users of access radio, which was only the one station, Wellington's 2YB, were told that sponsorship would have to be found for the station and that they would also need to contribute financially. This did little more than prompt the formation of an Access Users' Group, begun specifically to thwart the RNZ plan. It did, however, signal that RNZ would not be extending the Wellington access radio concept beyond that city and, elsewhere, alternative approaches were taken. Access Radio Wairarapa, begun in 1986, took

one route. Unwilling and unable to devote an entire station to access radio, RNZ gave three hours on Sunday evenings on its 2ZD frequency to Access Radio Wairapa. The station supporters obtained equipment through fundraising and Lottery Board grants and set up a studio at Wairapa College, where radio production became part of the school's English syllabus. In Auckland in 1987 access radio began broadcasting from Auckland University's Campus Radio. Hours were given during the university year but the main time for access broadcasts was from mid-December to early February during the university summer recess. In Christchurch Plains FM, a station started principally as a training facility for Christchurch Polytechnic's media studies students, began giving access to community groups from February 1988. Both the Auckland and Christchurch stations accepted RNZ's call for sponsorship and user contributions. They sought advertising and sponsorship and the users paid annual subscriptions plus fees for air time.

PRIVATE RADIO AND THE BROADCASTING TRIBUNAL

Like publicly owned radio, private radio had to grow slowly in order to keep pace with the tribunal requirement for a gradual and orderly development. Accordingly, most areas, non-commercial and commercial, AM and FM, felt frustrated. There were few additions to the number of private stations broadcasting in AM. Non-commercial private AM stations effectively meant Radio Rhema for, apart from Dunedin's 4XD, its relay stations were the only ones in that category. Radio Rhema wanted to found further relay stations in order to develop a national network devoted to its Christian broadcasts. It had the asset backing to do so but was forced to keep to a tribunal-imposed schedule for growth. The tribunal regarded Radio Rhema as a minority broadcaster and gave it no priority. It estimated the Christchurch audience at 22,000, as compared with 3ZB's 119,000, and saw the difference as even greater in Wellington where Radio Rhema broadcast to an audience of 10,000 in comparison with 2ZB's 142,000. Only in 1989, the tribunal's final year of existence, was it allowed to extend beyond its 1983 boundaries. In that year Radio Rhema opened relay stations in Hamilton, Rotorua and Taupo, but its main wish was to broadcast in Auckland. That application, though, was always declined with strong opposition coming from the BCNZ, which wanted to reserve AM frequency 630, the last available in Auckland, for its proposed Polynesian station. As the tribunal went out of existence, Radio Rhema continued to be excluded from the country's largest centre of population.⁵⁶

For private commercial AM stations there was little change during the tribunal's final five years with the same total of stations broadcasting in 1989 as in 1984. That statistic did, however, disguise two changes. In late

1987 the Kapiti Coast station, Radio Horowhenua, which had previously received short-term warrants, was finally given a permanent warrant and began full-time broadcasting. Although it was a private station, Radio Horowhenua was owned 15 per cent by RNZ and enjoyed its news service and national sales network. The number of AM stations was reduced the following year when Whakatane's Radio Bay of Plenty left the AM band after receiving an FM warrant.

Nor was there any real change in the formats of the private commercial AM stations. This was of particular concern to Radio Pacific which, once 1ZB changed to a news-talk format, applied to change its format to meet this new competition. In 1987 the tribunal redrafted Radio Pacific's warrant conditions. These still limited it to no more than a 10 per cent music content and required the station 'to foster the cultural identity of minority ethnic groups in Auckland and to develop community involvement, health education and a caring understanding society and to that end shall ensure that significant elements of programming shall be directed to meeting those specific needs and other needs of a multi-cultural audience within the talk-back format'. Whether Radio Pacific was meeting these extraordinary requirements for a commercial radio station was debatable. In 1986 the station had made a highly symbolic move when it left its Manukau headquarters in South Auckland for new premises in Ponsonby. Many argued that the station was no longer interested in its earlier intentions; one pressure group, the Citizens' Association for Racial Equality (CARE), claimed the station was interested only in promoting rugby, racing and racism. The tribunal was not convinced the station had set out to promote racist views but did note there were complaints that it 'promoted a racially provocative style in its talk-back shows to increase its listening public and for its commercial advantage'. The real question, as far as the station was concerned, was whether it could afford to be faithful to the conditions of its warrant. Brent Impey, Radio Pacific's counsel, argued that multicultural programming and catering for the needs of minority ethnic groups were not conditions that could be served by a commercial radio station, let alone one in a competitive situation. In 1988 the station applied again to change its warrant conditions but the tribunal was unmoved and Radio Pacific's restrictions remained.⁵⁷

The greatest change was in private commercial FM broadcasting where the three stations broadcasting in 1984 grew to 19 in 1989. But even here the growth was less than the numbers suggested for many of the new stations relayed programmes from a parent. Whangarei's Northland FM, which began broadcasting in 1985, had three relay stations elsewhere in Northland, Radio Bay of Plenty had a relay station in Ohope, and Rotorua's HotFM began broadcasting in 1989 with three further stations relaying its programmes. The distinct new FM stations were Hamilton's 898FM which began in 1985, Christchurch's Canterbury FM broadcast-

ing from 1987 as the first private FM station in the South Island, Manawatu's 2XSS also broadcasting from 1987, and Nelson's Radio Fifeshire, which opened in 1988. Radio Fifeshire had had two short-term summer-time broadcasting warrants and won the tribunal's approval over the BCNZ's ZM application for the permanent Nelson FM warrant. Two further stations, one starting in Timaru in 1986 and another in Oamaru starting in 1988, were factory site warrants granted to meatworks so that workers could listen to their local AM station through headsets.

The start of Radio Fifeshire in Nelson also meant the beginning there of RNZ's Concert Programme since Radio Fifeshire offered, and the tribunal and RNZ accepted, joint use of the FM transmitter it had erected. That offer was not so much altruistic as to negate any advantage RNZ might have had with its proposal to begin Concert Programme transmissions in Nelson if and when it gained a warrant to also start a ZM-FM station there.

The notable organisational change in private radio in the mid- and late-1980s was an increasingly complex system of interlocking ownership of stations, which made a mockery of the tribunal policy favouring distinct ownership for separate stations. Late in 1984 the minister of broadcasting asked the tribunal to carry out an urgent review of private station ownership. This was prompted by his and public concern at various share purchases made by Brierley Investments. The tribunal made clear its dislike of that company's 'casual attitude to broadcasting ownership laws', but Brierley Investments Ltd's (BIL) dominance was made possible by already existing interconnected ownership. BIL purchased shares in Radio Hauraki, eventually gaining a 59 per cent majority holding. It also purchased a 16 per cent holding in Radio Windy and a 28 per cent holding in Radio Avon. Radio Hauraki also held 30 per cent of the shares in Radio Windy and 61 per cent of the shares in Radio i, while Radio Avon held 25 per cent of the shares, the single largest shareholding, in both Radio Otago and Foveaux Radio. In addition New Zealand News, a BIL subsidiary which published the *Auckland Star* and *Christchurch Star*, held a further 15 per cent of the Radio Windy shares and had a 25 per cent holding in the Hawke's Bay FM station.⁵⁸ Ministerial and tribunal action had little effect: many of the above acquisitions were made after Hunt's call. There was a substantial change in the company's investments after the general stock market collapse in October 1987. Even then, further arrangements of interlocking ownership emerged. The ownership of private radio, in defiance of the tribunal's desires, became part of the prevailing range of corporate activity in New Zealand.

These years were not good ones for private radio. With the minister's support for RNZ's plans, the publicly owned commercial stations were able to develop and compete successfully with their private counterparts, which were shown wanting, especially in their news. There was a lack of

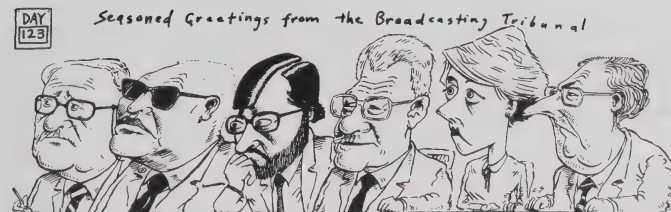
trust and co-operation among the stations, which stemmed both from a fear of each others' intentions in a time of shareholding takeovers and from an unwillingness to spend enough to compete with RNZ's well-established service. Radio Avon's news network became largely confined to Radio Otago and Foveaux Radio, stations in which it had a shareholding. In Auckland Radio Pacific began its own newscast service. But, as Warren Mayne, then New Zealand's only journalist specialising in broadcasting, noted, 'For practical purposes all the private industry . . . [offered was] a three person bureau in Parliament and a host of local newsrooms chasing hometown fire engines.'⁵⁹ In all centres the private stations were beaten in the ratings by RNZ. The tribunal policy meant that any expansion was likely to be slow and slight. The ministerial directives supported RNZ. In spite of the BCNZ's financial troubles, it was the private radio stations that were the poor relations of New Zealand broadcasting.

TELEVISION AND THE BROADCASTING TRIBUNAL

Television became the dominating focus for the tribunal in its last years. The National government's call for the development of regional television stations never led to the tribunal calling for applications and the whole process was stopped with Labour's victory. In November 1984, however, Labour acted similarly and Jonathan Hunt directed the tribunal to call for applications both for television warrants and for television programme warrants to produce news and current affairs programmes. This was the start of a marathon of tribunal sittings and associated litigation that culminated in early 1989 with a warrant for a third television service being issued to a group of associated companies. The warrant was for a national network originating from Auckland with regional contributions to be phased in gradually.

The process began with the many partisan groups stating their positions. The BCNZ opposed the introduction of a third channel. Dick told the board an increase in the number of television channels did not lead to continued advertising growth. He argued that the proportion of total advertising in the electronic media was declining while advertising had stabilised as a proportion of GDP. His conclusion, which the board accepted, was that there was no room in New Zealand for a third channel and that the government and the tribunal should be told so.⁶⁰ Outside the BCNZ there was considerable support for a third channel. The advertising industry rejected the board's view about advertising and their advocacy for another channel was supported by others, especially existing and would-be independent programme-makers and the many political groups that wished to see one channel not controlled by the BCNZ.

At the end of March 1985, the deadline, a surprisingly high number of applications had been lodged with the tribunal. Eight companies made 22



Cartoonist Chris Slane, son of Broadcasting Tribunal chairman Bruce Slane, and his greeting card for tribunal members towards the end of the marathon hearings for the TV3 warrant. From left, Mervyn Ake, Wiremu Kerekere, Robert Boyd-Bell, Bruce Slane, Ann Wilson, Geoffrey Schmitt.

applications for station warrants and five companies applied for 20 programme warrants.⁶¹ The 126 days of hearings, which began in August 1985 and continued until February 1987, were held mainly in Auckland but also in Wellington and Christchurch. The tribunal's decision was announced in August 1987 when all applications were denied but for those from five related companies: Tele-vid Region One, Two, Three and Four, along with Tele-vid News. Their proposal for a combination of regional and national programming contrasted well with existing television broadcasting and was in accord with the tribunal's desires. The principals in the companies were mainly television broadcasters who had gained most of their experience with the BCNZ and its predecessors and had become increasingly exasperated with corporation broadcasting from the time TV1 and SPTV were rejoined. Their combined experience and expertise were indisputable and the tribunal considered their application to be by far the most thorough. After the decision six appeals were lodged with the High Court and there were two applications for a judicial review of the warranting process. The appeals, made with a sense of hope rather than logic, had little chance of success. The BCNZ obtained opinions from two QCs before accepting that the odds in its favour were 'not worth the candle' and withdrawing its appeal.⁶² Eventually all the appeals were withdrawn, the review applications were dismissed and in 1989 the warrant was granted.

The process was remarkably extensive and expensive. It cost the tribunal just on \$500,000 and the eight applicants more than \$1 million each. There was considerable acrimony during and after the process with most parties at some stage expressing concern at the actions of others. The tribunal laid responsibility for the length of the proceedings 'squarely on the shoulders of the parties and their counsel', accusing them of showing 'a complete misunderstanding of the value of cross examination'.⁶³ Such complaints were somewhat unfair in that the judicial nature of the tribunal's work and its own approach to its task required and supported the complete use of legal

procedure. It was only after the television hearings that the tribunal, belatedly, revised its procedures to make them more administrative and less courtroom in style.⁶⁴ But the tribunal was by no means the sole or even the major reason for the long delays. The unexpected number of applicants itself meant the hearings would take longer than originally envisaged. With nationwide television warrants at issue, the stakes were high and no party was prepared to leave unexplored any avenue that might advance its case. Hunt was reported as expecting a third channel to be broadcasting by the end of 1985.⁶⁵ If correct, that optimism indicated a naive understanding of a political creation the proceedings of which left most participants exhausted. Even the BCNZ tired of the hearings, regarding them as detrimental to its own efforts. It did its considerable best to delay the tribunal decision. Initially it regarded the continuing hearings with delight as an unexpected but welcome delay allowing it to prepare for impending competition but this work was completed well before the tribunal was finished and the corporation was merely marking time, unable to maintain any momentum as it waited on the final decision.⁶⁶

Although the hearings did lead to a further television channel, which began broadcasting in November 1989, it was not of the regional nature originally called for by the government nor as warranted by the tribunal. The exhausting episode, which was of limited and decreasing relevance to the style and ownership of the eventual channel, discredited a tribunal process that had been endorsed by both the National and Labour governments, and was a strong factor in the decision to abolish the tribunal and end that approach to the granting of broadcasting warrants. The main outcome was to delay for years the entry of a third television channel and to maintain the BCNZ television monopoly for the final years of the corporation's existence.

FINANCING BROADCASTING

The fourth Labour government was neither financially able nor willing to be generous to the BCNZ, nor even to return to the support levels of earlier years. The BCNZ was required to survive principally on its commercial income and in its final years changed so as to even further emphasise its commercial rather than its public broadcasting. Yet it was required to maintain the elements of public broadcasting, from the NZSO, to coverage of remote areas, to non-commercial broadcasting itself, all of contemporary and historical importance but also of considerable economic cost. During the Muldoon years, with licence fee income dwindling as a proportion of this cost, more had been required from commercial broadcasting to bridge the gap. Now, under Labour, there was a need for large-scale cuts in costs and TVNZ, by far the largest commercial entity within the corporation, became the major focus for financial stringency.

Like the Muldoon and the third Labour governments, Lange's administration took no heed of its power within the Broadcasting Act to pay for the NZSO from the consolidated fund. That remained a charge on the corporation. The government, however, was not onerous, at least initially, in its requirement for a dividend from the BCNZ: \$1 million was paid in December 1986 but otherwise there were no dividend requirements until Treasury forcefully revisited the issue in 1988.

Of continuous concern to Rennie's board was the level of the broadcasting fee, set at \$45 and unchanged since 1975. Rennie began his chairmanship unconvinced that an application would receive support from the new government, which was likely to delay any decision until the Royal Commission had reported. Rennie was also unimpressed with the quality of the corporation's preparatory documentation for a fee increase and by February 1985 was faced with a probable end of the financial year favourable balance of \$20 to \$25 million, not the best position from which to argue for a higher licence fee. Although the balance was a most welcome change, Rennie regarded it as an illusory profit achieved only by failing to spend on needed equipment.⁶⁷

Early in its term, the new board made an unsuccessful application for an increase in the licence fee. In response the board decided to apply for an increase in television advertising, but opinions were sharply divided. All the regional advisory committees counselled against any increase, as did Ian Cross. Other senior executives were in favour, as was the board, which felt the economic realities, coupled with impending competition from a third channel, left no option. The board resolved that, with no licence fee increase forthcoming, TVNZ should move to six-day advertising, Monday to Saturday, on both channels for a 12-month period. This decision was reached more in sorrow than in eagerness. For some board members, Richard Rowley in particular, public broadcasting television meant non-commercial television. Its absence suggested that a small population base meant New Zealand could not afford a fully non-commercial channel. Equally importantly, the application for an increase in advertising indicated a growing suspicion in the board that the Labour government, like its National predecessor, had little commitment to public broadcasting television. Without the support of a government policy or necessary funding, the board decided it must move further towards full commercialisation of television.⁶⁸ The tribunal approved the increase and, from 29 July 1985, both channels had advertising six days a week. Ostensibly only for a year, the increase was permanent; it was later extended by board resolution for a further 12 months and yet again by another 12 months, each time with the way open for it to be continued.⁶⁹

A year into the new government's term there were still no moves to increase the licence fee. By 1986 fee income was down to 13.7 per cent of operating income. Not only was the fee eroded by inflation but the collec-

tion charges were growing faster than the income. In 1985/86, a \$500,000 decrease in the corporation's actual fee income gave further impetus to the BCNZ desire to wrest control away from the Post Office and collect the fee itself.⁷⁰

The BCNZ made a further application for a fee increase in April 1986. By that time it regarded the matter as urgent. The RNZ controller of programmes told the board that lack of funding meant a number of areas were not receiving the coverage they should. He specifically mentioned children's programmes, comedy and satire, commissions of light and serious music programmes, outside productions and an extended commitment to Maori broadcasting. In a *Listener* interview, Rennie noted that, as a cost-saving measure, radio drama was concentrating on plays with only three actors: should they start looking for plays for two?⁷¹ A wide repertoire is one of the traits of public broadcasting and the narrowing of the RNZ offerings was one indication of the growing inability to fulfil that function. Wakem informed the board that the emphasis had shifted to commercial programmes. There could be no experimentation or innovation in non-commercial programming until commercial revenue was established. Speaking for the corporation as a whole, Nigel Dick said that without a licence fee increase the choices were either to close down the smaller television centres and the small to medium radio stations, or simply to provide a chain of stations pumping out American- and Australian-made programmes.⁷²

The corporation pressed for a licence fee of \$130 and was supported by Jonathan Hunt. That figure was reached after the board began a process of itemising which of the BCNZ activities were non-commercial. This was a major change from the corporation's previous policy which had been to argue that there was a public service role in all its broadcasting. Now the BCNZ conceded there was a substantial distinction between its commercial and non-commercial broadcasting. A \$90 fee was determined to be the minimum to keep the current non-commercial activities going; the \$130 figure would allow various new projects, such as educational television, to be started.

The BCNZ faced strong opposition from the Treasury which emphasised the corporation's role as a commercial entity that should rely on its commercial revenue. This was just one of many instances of Treasury opposition to the BCNZ view of the proper nature of broadcasting activity. It came not only in such matters as the applications for a licence fee increase but also with regard to the corporation's day-to-day financial activity. The board complained to the prime minister and ministers of finance and broadcasting that it had difficulty in getting action from Treasury officials on urgent broadcasting matters. It also protested over the Treasury practice of using expenditure approval procedures to advocate changes in broadcasting structures and policies instead of applying the existing legislation and policy directions. The board believed that, as a

result, the BCNZ suffered real financial and commercial disadvantages.⁷³ The corporation made a tactical error by spending much effort on its submissions to the Royal Commission and combating the arguments of Treasury in that area. The board acknowledged that corporation broadcasting did not have a good public image and, as Rennie later accepted, that the BCNZ would have been better served by concentrating on and improving its own public relations, thus also changing the attitudes of a government that was very sensitive to public opinion.⁷⁴

The licence fee increase application went before the Cabinet Committee on Transport, Communications and State Enterprises in July 1986 where the Treasury view was even stronger. In the decision, announced in October, the title of the fee was changed to the public broadcasting fee and from 1 November 1986 the annual payment for a colour television licence rose from \$20 to \$65. The change in title was significant, indicating that the government saw the fee as supporting only those activities of the corporation specifically regarded as public broadcasting. Most attention, however, was focused on the size of the increase. The corporation judged it inadequate and accused the government of reaching 'a financially irrational decision'.⁷⁵ The board was shocked by the small size of the increase. Publicly the minister called it an interim increase, with the understanding the level could rise after the Royal Commission had reported, but the board was informed there was no chance of a further increase, at least until after the next election. The increase made little change in the mounting reliance on commercial revenue. The board concluded that the long wait, followed by what it regarded as a derisory increase, was indicative of a governmental lack of concern for public broadcasting and a requirement that the Muldoon government's emphasis on commercial rather than non-commercial broadcasting be continued. At this stage the board accepted that public broadcasting could never be the same. Even after Labour's re-election in 1987 there was no move to increase the licence fee. In August 1988, with SOE status nigh, the board finally abandoned all hope of obtaining an increase in the fee or of getting the government to pay the legislatively possible two-thirds contribution to the net cost of the NZSO.⁷⁶

Sunday advertising was advocated but not introduced. RNZ argued for it in 1985 but did not receive board approval to apply to the tribunal for permission. In 1986, after Labour's slight increase in the licence fee, the directors-general of both TVNZ and RNZ advised a move to seven-day advertising. Although the board was then more receptive it realised there was little chance of the tribunal reversing its policy unless the minister advocated the introduction of Sunday advertising. There was no such political support.⁷⁷

For the board, Labour's deliberations over the fee marked 1986 as an extraordinary year that none would like repeated. But the year did end

with what Rennie referred to as 'three Christmas presents'. One was the \$1 million dividend required by the minister of finance, considerably less than feared by the board. The minister also agreed that the determination of future dividends would include consultation with the board. The second was the announcement that, from 1 April 1987, the board was to be responsible for collecting the public broadcasting fee. It became a matter of civil debt collection not subject to criminal prosecution for default. This change freed the board of the Post Office collection charges and also presented an opportunity to introduce a better system. The third was the announcement from the minister of finance that the BCNZ now had permanent permission to borrow to a level consistent with its ability to repay. The level was set at \$50 million.⁷⁸

But, as the board realised, the third 'present' was double-edged, marking a significant step in the BCNZ's changing conduct of its business activity. The Treasury supported the permission to borrow, one of the few times it and the BCNZ were in unison, because such a move took the corporation another step closer to becoming an efficient business. In the Treasury view, carrying a significant amount of debt was a necessary aspect of greater economic efficiency. The change did not merely increase the BCNZ's financial powers but rearranged its activities which were to include significant borrowing and the payment of a substantial annual dividend.

Because the 1986 fee increase was 'at an inadequate level to fund existing activities', the board decided to greatly curtail expenditure: cuts of around \$20 million a year were needed urgently. It was TVNZ, the major financial entity within the BCNZ, that felt the brunt of the corporation's economics. Dick argued these should come largely from TVNZ for the simple reason that only limited cuts could be made elsewhere. Mounter disagreed, valiantly contending that this would be to admit defeat in the expected competition with a third channel before the battle even started. He suggested that, before any attacks were made on TVNZ's profitability, income should be increased by moving to seven-day advertising and cutting the Concert Programme and the links with the NZSO. Wakem joined him in supporting Sunday advertising and also advocated allowing alcohol advertising and dropping the shortwave broadcasts of External Services. But these were essentially debating positions within a board discussion; all such suggested savings, though pointing to matters of great cost, involved matters on which the BCNZ could not act unilaterally. And even if such measures were followed, they would not save enough.

TVNZ's dominance in the corporation finances can be illustrated from an examination of the annual report. In the 1986/87 year the public broadcasting fee contributed \$41.6 million to the BCNZ's net income, while \$21 million came from the *Listener*, \$56.3 million from RNZ and \$168.8 million from TVNZ.⁷⁹ The costs of the various components of the corporation were of the same comparative order of magnitude; Dick's

assessment was correct. A budget cut of the size contemplated had to fall most heavily on TVNZ. At an urgent meeting, Rennie told the prime minister and finance and broadcasting ministers that what the board was being forced to contemplate was entirely inconsistent with both the objectives of public broadcasting and the government's own statement of broadcasting policy. The minister did not accept the board's assessment of the limited nature of the BCNZ resources; a decision was taken to reduce the TVNZ budget by some \$15 to \$20 million.

CORPORATION TELEVISION

At TVNZ, Mounter and his staff were faced with conflicting requirements. It was assumed that a competitive television channel was imminent and much emphasis was placed on preparations to meet this challenge. Yet this was happening at a time when TVNZ's ability to spend depended not on its own commercial revenue but on the insecure financial status of the entire BCNZ. One change made soon after Mounter's arrival was the extension of television hours, including the weekend introduction of 24-hour transmissions. From 4 April 1986 weekday transmissions from both channels began one and a half hours earlier, at 9am, and ended an hour later, at midnight, from Sunday to Thursday. TVNZ transmitted continuously from 9am on Friday to midnight on Sunday.

Like the rest of the BCNZ, TVNZ had experienced years of privation and this was reflected in low morale and pronounced staff shortages. In his initial examination of TVNZ, Mounter concluded that the organisation was administratively top-heavy and the result was numerous staff losses and some savings. In programme-making terms, however, Mounter did not form the same opinion. On the contrary, he saw TVNZ as 'extremely cost efficient' in comparison with overseas organisations. The staff in this area suffered particularly from shortages. In mid-1985 Martin had reported to the board that TVNZ staff turnover had reached 35 per cent annually as compared with the normal statistic of 17 per cent. There were various reasons for this. Pay scales had not been increased in tandem with growth in the New Zealand private sector or other countries' television companies and many staff left for greener pastures elsewhere. Further, with a competitive channel supposedly in the wings, the chances of later re-employment were relatively high; it was a safe time to taste employment elsewhere. The result was an inability to maintain, let alone increase, the existing levels of production, and shuffling continued to make fuller use of the staff who were available. Thus the making of *Kaleidoscope* was moved from Auckland, where the staff shortages were greatest, to Wellington, where more directors and reporters were available.⁸⁰ *Kaleidoscope* was a successful and well-regarded weekly arts programme and the move provoked anger and complaints. Other shows, such as *Production Line* and *Money Report*,

were forced to disappear entirely. The dropping of *Money Report* was of particular significance: during a period of sweeping change there was no economic analysis on television.

The dropping of New Zealand-made programmes continued after the 1986 cut in TVNZ's budget. Programme production was severely curtailed. The light entertainment section had a 25 per cent reduction, which meant the end of *Jazz Scene*, *Top Dance* and the *Tonight Show*, and children's programmes suffered a 50 per cent on-air cut. Drama, being the most expensive of local productions, was also slashed. Mounter estimated that, for every hour of drama, one could make 10 hours of other types of production. The spectrum of drama stretches from the most expensive long production period work, usually shot on film, to less expensive and more rapidly produced work filmed on video. The more expensive works were cancelled. These included two proposed kidult series and without them TVNZ had little to offer at the annual Cannes television festival and was unable to build on its successful record of selling kidult dramas abroad. TVNZ concentrated on less expensive drama productions but even those were considerably altered. *The Marching Girls*, a series on a uniquely New Zealand form of recreation, and *Peppermint Twist*, concerning New Zealand teenagers in 1963, were both greatly rewritten to accommodate the reduced budget and *Gloss*, a slick soap opera, was cut from 64 to 18 episodes. In the whole of 1988 TVNZ broadcast a mere 27 hours of New Zealand drama, 0.27 per cent of the almost 10,000 hours of transmission over the two channels.

The demand for economies led to some ill-advised actions that ultimately assisted neither the corporation's public image nor its finances. The most public case was TVNZ's attempt to charge the record industry a total of around \$500,000 a year to broadcast music videos, not on the grounds that TVNZ was impecunious, but because the videos were advertising for the record industry which received a great deal of free publicity for its products. The argument was right but it ignored the detail that music videos were programming which TVNZ received free and from which it made around \$5 million annually in video show-based advertising. All the dispute achieved was a temporary halt in the screening of music videos which meant a loss of advertising for TVNZ and record sales for the record companies.

News and current affairs also lost programmes, including the lunchtime *Newsline* and *The Crosbie Report*, but generally this was the one area relatively exempt from cost cutting. Mounter's own background was in news and current affairs but, more importantly, he felt that a television station 'has to get [this area] right if you're to be taken seriously' and also that it was a key component in competition between television channels.⁸¹ It was the coming of another channel that exempted the news system from the economic measures that were applied elsewhere.⁸² This attitude had early

results, notably the May 1986 decision for TVNZ to establish resident journalists in Sydney and London to service TVNZ news and current affairs.⁸³ These had been sought for years but had always been delayed on the grounds of cost. It was to the credit of both TVNZ and the BCNZ that the change was finally made in spite of continuing financial uncertainty. Television viewers benefited as the foreign correspondents not only gave a New Zealand perspective in their own reports, but also influenced the selection of other news material sent on by satellite. Susan Wood was the first appointee to the Sydney position. The first European correspondent, based in London as part of a joint bureau shared with Australia's Channel 9, was Liam Jeory. He started in November 1988 on a three-year term and was succeeded by Cameron Bennett who held the position for the next three years.⁸⁴ Mounter's determination to upgrade TVNZ's news and current affairs was also reflected in the 1987 recruitment of Paul Norris as controller of those broadcasts. A New Zealander, Norris had returned after two decades in Britain, where he worked in Fleet Street as a political journalist but largely with the BBC as a current affairs producer.

The financial stringencies suffered at TVNZ made a mockery of the board's and Mounter's wish to increase the proportion of New Zealand-made rather than imported programmes. Instead TVNZ maintained, and towards the end of the BCNZ era increased, its proportion of imported programmes which continued to come almost entirely from the United States, Britain and Australia. One significant change was made late in 1986 when programme purchases from the BBC were governed by a five-year preferential purchasing agreement. This was a new agreement that allowed TVNZ immediate access to BBC programmes available for sale. Previously, availability to New Zealand had been dependent on purchases made elsewhere and so BBC programmes could not come straight to New Zealand.⁸⁵

When Mounter was appointed, New Zealand-made programmes and American programmes each totalled 29 per cent of what was screened in prime time. The American programmes were predominantly drama whereas New Zealand offered a mixture from news, current affairs and sport to light entertainment and documentaries. Mounter's unachieved aim was to increase the New Zealand proportion to 50 per cent 'within a few years'. Instead the drive to cut costs led to a decrease in local content and a policy of economic rationalisation ensured that less would be produced in fewer centres. The final BCNZ years brought moves to reduce even further the regional nature of corporation television programming and production.

Although he advocated an increase in New Zealand programmes, Mounter also considered that TVNZ was making too many types of programmes in too many centres. He wanted a national rather than a regional emphasis and a concentration of programme production in Auckland and Wellington.⁸⁶ The reduction of regional programming was much debated within both TVNZ and the BCNZ and regretted by most. Few felt TVNZ

had an excessive regional focus that needed to be cut back in the interests of balanced programming. On the contrary, Nigel Dick believed New Zealand television had a considerably smaller regional presence than its Australian counterpart. Mounter expressed to the board his disappointment in TVNZ news and current affairs, referring in particular to the lack of regional programmes.⁸⁷ His arguments for reduction were essentially economic and in the financial interests of the corporation rather than the viewing interests of the audience. Not only was regional programming more expensive because it needed to be made anew for each area but it was also tied to local advertising which was a poor financial contributor. The economic arguments won out and there were continuing reductions in regional programming, often without board consideration. When, in 1985, two regional programmes were cut, there were many complaints to board members. Monaghan, speaking for TVNZ, told the board that TVNZ was a national rather than a regional broadcaster, a statement that ignored the board's right to make such a policy decision and blithely denied one of the two orientations that had characterised New Zealand television since it began. In the same year the regional component of the main daily news bulletin was decreased, again with no prior notification to the board, though this time TVNZ did accept the board's strong suggestion to reconsider. But moving towards nationally uniform programming was becoming a seemingly inexorable process.

Equally economically driven was the centralisation of programme production, a developing feature of TVNZ even before the appointment of Rennie's board. In 1985 the head of children's programmes, then a Dunedin-based unit, reported that staff were deterred from accepting appointments because the South Island was perceived as a place with restricted career opportunities. In that year 935 programming hours were produced in Auckland, 942 in Wellington, 293 in Christchurch and 276 in Dunedin, but each centre still retained a multipurpose production unit. As the economic difficulties increased the decisions were taken in 1987 and 1988 to concentrate production at first in Auckland and Wellington and eventually particularly in Auckland.⁸⁸

Dick and Mounter both felt that TVNZ was doing much more than it could afford and that it was an inefficient system with facilities that needed rationalising. This meant turning the four multipurpose production units into four specific purpose units. Initially the changes meant a further concentration of production in Wellington and Auckland. Since these were the two centres with the highest overheads, the board decided the best way to reduce costs overall was to make maximum use of them. Faced with this decision in 1987, Mounter acknowledged that it was a matter of making such changes then or cutting so heavily later on that the organisation might never recover. Both Christchurch and Dunedin continued to contribute to news production but otherwise the Christchurch unit became

effectively a specialised producer of children's programmes, an area in which it was well established, and Dunedin concentrated on the production of wildlife programmes. Its National History Unit had gained an international reputation and the programmes it made sold well overseas and were praised at home.⁸⁹

Gradually production was further concentrated in Auckland with the great majority of TVNZ expenditure going there. Wellington suffered a similar fate to the South Island cities. Television production in Wellington meant Avalon, a centre Mounter regarded with disfavour. Avalon's size and full equipment made it costly. Although the facilities allowed excellent production standards most programmes required much less and could be made more economically elsewhere. Mounter, required to produce a large number of programmes cheaply, promoted Auckland as the venue for the majority of production. Avalon was at its best when used for very large productions but these were not an ongoing or even a regular feature. Avalon clearly did not figure well in TVNZ planning and Mounter mused on the effects of its removal. He told the board that if what he called 'heavy drama' could be put out on reliable contract and Avalon taken out of action, then savings of up to \$60 million would be possible. But the impending competition with a third channel meant that such a resource would not be abandoned. In 1988, though acknowledging that TVNZ had 30 per cent too much production capacity, Mounter considered that shedding further surplus capacity should wait while TVNZ faced what he regarded as the major priority, pushing the new channel down into third place in the audience ratings.⁹⁰

AUCKLAND

Auckland had been the country's major population centre since the late nineteenth century and its pre-eminence grew throughout the twentieth. Within broadcasting its reluctance to accept outside direction, especially from Wellington, had been a byword ever since the days of the NZBS. As in other areas of New Zealand life, strained relationships between the two centres was a regular feature in broadcasting history. By the 1980s Auckland's dominance was such that, in spite of Wellington being the capital, it made cultural and economic sense to base the corporation's television activity in the northern centre.

This was not decided before Mounter's appointment. When Martin retired he told the board he had spent 50 per cent of his time in Wellington and it was resolved that, with the next appointee, the position would be established there.⁹¹ But the board allowed Mounter to change this decision and base himself in Auckland. This move was supported by Nigel Dick who, in 1986, told the board he believed Auckland would eventually become the main centre of national production.⁹²

Auckland's prominence was aided by the board and its building programme. Auckland had never had adequate television facilities and remedying that defect was a major priority for Rennie's board. The task was handled by a subcommittee; its main figure was the deputy chairman, the Auckland-based Brian Corban. In the heady days of the mid-1980s land purchases and building construction were fraught with pitfalls, especially in Auckland, and the BCNZ was fortunate to have a person of Corban's experience in charge. The subcommittee investigated various possibilities during 1984 and 1985 but always with a principal interest in a complex series of purchases of Hobson Street properties in central Auckland. The settling of the purchases was announced to the board on 26 February 1986 and Corban congratulated for completing the work not only within budget but also within a reasonable period of time.

The building proposals were caught between a need for haste — they had to be completed in time for the 1990 Commonwealth Games — and a need for delay in order to find a cheaper solution for the financially straitened BCNZ. In late 1986 a contract was signed with Hawkins Construction for the construction of the Auckland Television Centre. The board wanted to avoid another Avalon: a building specifically designed as a television centre but of declining value as its nature and use changed. The Hobson Street centre was designed to include a shopping mall and an office block so that it could be sold if and when the needs of TVNZ altered.⁹³ Although this placed limitations on the design possibilities for TVNZ purposes, the Hobson Street building was completed as both a network and an administration centre. It did not suffer from the construction defects shared by many other buildings erected in the boom years before the 1987 stock market crash and solved the vexed accommodation difficulties that had increasingly bedevilled Auckland television since the 1960s. With the new construction under way, the board sought ministerial permission and sold the Tank Farm site, owned since NZBC days but never developed for Auckland television use.⁹⁴

RNZ followed TVNZ to new quarters but its journey was slower. Broadcasting House, the Durham Street property used by Auckland radio since World War II, was sold in 1987 for \$6.5 million. Far from being sentimental about the property, Wakem considered it was one of the 'mausoleums' in which RNZ was housed and she was keen to move to accommodation that suited broadcasting in the 1990s. The initial plan, budgeted at \$27 million, was to construct an 11-level office tower plus a main recording studio plus carpark on the BCNZ-owned Hobson Street land adjacent to the TVNZ development.⁹⁵ This did not eventuate and, besides, the close proximity of TVNZ and RNZ would have been of doubtful worth after Labour's broadcasting restructuring fully separated the two media. RNZ did not find an Auckland home until after the restructuring when its board member Bob Jones, the 1970s Radio Windy

talkback host and then scourge of RNZ, led a property purchase that saw RNZ move to its current Auckland base on the corner of Cook and Nelson Streets. As it had done for TVNZ, Auckland in the 1990s became the inevitable national headquarters for publicly owned radio.

SATELLITE COMMUNICATION

The other area of growth in the last years of the BCNZ was satellite communication. Norris's appointment as controller of news and current affairs followed the transfer of Bruce Crossan from that position to head the corporation's special projects. Among the most important of these was satellite access, which Mounter saw as the final key to the development of the news programmes and competition with the third channel. New Zealand was a late entrant. The Muldoon government, in spite of urging from Hugh Templeton, made no move into satellite technology. The opportunity was there: Australia was preparing its own AUSSAT system and Templeton was keen to cling to the coat-tails of New Zealand's larger neighbour and share use of the system. But in the face of indifference at political and senior Post Office levels, the Communications Advisory Council merely recognised the technology but did not push for its introduction.

In 1984 Allan Martin asked for permanent satellite access to further speed news availability. His proposal, in conjunction with Kerry Packer's Channel 9 of Australia, involved joint use of half-transponders on the Pacific and Atlantic satellites and their associated equipment. The board approved the proposal in November and negotiations were held with the NZPO regarding the Warkworth I satellite receiving facility. During 1985 the proposals changed. Channel 9 approached the various South Pacific Island broadcasting organisations with proposals to transmit its programmes there. While broadening his television territory, Packer also intended to control some of the highly profitable international trade of data transfer. The BCNZ supported the Channel 9 proposal which would have broken the Post Office monopoly over New Zealand's satellite reception and transmission. For the last three months of 1985 the corporation entered into a trial with Channel 9 for shared use of satellite-beamed programme material. The trial quickly became an interim agreement extended for all of 1986 or until such time within that period as Channel 9 was able to offer the full Pacific and Atlantic satellite agreements first negotiated.

The linkages with Channel 9 did not in any way dispel the Australian/New Zealand rivalry which was most obvious in the competition to broadcast to the Pacific Islands. Finally, New Zealand went on an independent quest for satellite facilities. In 1986 TVNZ approached all the Pacific Island broadcasting authorities with a view to pre-empting private Australian initiatives, in particular those by the Packer organisation, to 'corner the market'. The TVNZ proposal was to have videotapes available

cheaply for replaying locally; later satellite coverage would be available from New Zealand. Dick reported to the board that all the islands, with the exception of Fiji, were interested in the TVNZ proposal. With Australia also on the scene the matter was regarded as urgent. When the South Pacific Forum set up its own Broadcasting Council TVNZ felt this indicated that the Packer organisation had not sewn up the whole of the Pacific, thus leaving the door open for New Zealand involvement.⁹⁶

The BCNZ wanted not only to compete with Australian organisations for a South Pacific Island market but also to preserve independence at home in New Zealand, which Packer regarded as another South Pacific island to be penetrated. Such suspicions increased with the arrival of Julian Mounter who feared that Packer's proposal could lead to a Channel 9-controlled satellite service to New Zealand, effectively a pirate television channel beyond the control of New Zealand authorities. Nigel Dick argued that three Australian consortia had the potential to develop into what he called a 'sky channel network'. He feared that New Zealand was not only being shut out of the Pacific Islands but out of Pacific satellite communication. He advocated attempting to obtain a shareholding in Pacific satellite facilities to give the corporation some measure of control over what it received and to allow a New Zealand signal to be sent elsewhere.⁹⁷

Eventually the corporation obtained its own satellite service into New Zealand by leasing TVNZ's own transponder on the Pacific satellite. Crossan handled the negotiations and the new satellite arrangements were in place in April 1987. The BCNZ had use of a full-time satellite link between London, North America and New Zealand. As O'Regan noted, for the first time the board knew where it was going. In late 1987 the Pacific satellite was upgraded from hemisphere to global beam, thus removing the need for an extra and expensive satellite leap to New Zealand. Ownership of the transponder allowed TVNZ itself to enter the market for such activity as international data transfer. In May 1988 Dick reported the purchase as one of the best things the BCNZ had ever done and said the sale of its down time was bringing an income that might eventually pay most of its expenses.⁹⁸

With the development of its own satellite facilities the BCNZ reconsidered and severed its long-standing relationship with Visnews. The ABC, CBC and BCNZ all had shareholdings in Visnews, as did Reuters who were the dominant shareholders. The difficulty for the other shareholders was that Reuters was developing non-broadcasting aspects of its business, especially the transmission of business and financial information, and Visnews was caught up in this new orientation. The BCNZ decided that Reuters' attitude to Visnews was something it could not afford so it resolved to sell its shareholding. Dick, who was to attend the November 1987 London meeting of Visnews, was given authority to approve a share sale in what looked like a change of ownership with Reuters taking 75 per

cent of Visnews and the BBC the final 25 per cent. Dick was hopeful of retaining a Visnews service. The shares were sold for £56 per share, a price the board regarded as 'most satisfactory'.⁹⁹

The satellite developments greatly assisted the TVNZ desire to improve its news programmes and make them more immediate. There was, too, a concentration of news and current affairs programmes on TV1 and a growing demarcation between the two channels which had long had a pronounced similarity. This was in readiness for possible changes anticipated after the 1987 election. Commentator Warren Mayne described the 1987 formula for TV1 as 'upmarket information and British entertainment-based . . . programming that tends to attract lower audience numbers compared with the more populist TV2 line-up'.¹⁰⁰ This change was both part of Mounter's competitive strategy and in line with the general BCNZ policy to differentiate public service broadcasting from commercial programming. The separation was not complete but the trend was clear. If Labour or any future government decided on a full split of public service and commercial broadcasting TV1 would be the non-commercial channel.

ELECTION BROADCASTING

In the 1987 election campaign, as in the past, the political parties could not purchase television time for political advertisements. This, however, was not the board's initial wish. Rennie's board decided that paid political advertising should be available on both radio and television as long as it was available, as far as possible, to all aspiring candidates on an equal footing. But the Royal Commission on the Electoral System, which reported in 1986, recommended that there be no paid political advertising during the three months before an election. This prompted the board to seek the comments of the various political parties who were much in favour of retaining of the status quo. The result was inconsistent: paid political advertising was not available on television but was allowed on radio stations, both RNZ and private. The free time for political broadcasts was again allocated by the board, with Labour and National receiving 123 minutes each and the Democrats 64. Once again, the free time came with a proviso: 'in all cases the content of the broadcasts must illuminate party policy on specific issues'. This was determined to mean that each broadcast must be a minimum of three minutes in length.¹⁰¹

The results of the poll, with Labour's re-election, were well covered on both radio and television. RNZ's election night programme was covered by both National Radio and the commercial stations. Unlike the 1984 snap election, that of 1987 allowed much planning and *Decision '87* was a very large production for TVNZ, with live coverage from 22 electorates and from the Labour and National Party headquarters. Exit polls, questioning people as they came out of the voting booths, had become a com-

mon technique in many countries but was not permitted in New Zealand so all the BCNZ predictions remained based on the actual vote count as it became available. Competition between radio and television was as intense as in earlier elections with much effort made in predicting by 8pm a result that would be evident an hour later.

The real innovation for the 1987 campaign was made by the Labour government and caused considerable concern to the BCNZ. It involved the use, before the election, of two media campaigns that ostensibly provided public information but were widely regarded as supportive of the government and designed to assist its re-election prospects. One, known as 'Access', dealt with labour training schemes. The other, entitled 'Rub out the Crim', concerned citizen action against criminal behaviour. The auditor-general contacted the corporation to discuss the latter campaign, fearing government funds were used for party political purposes. Corporation executives discussed with Prebble the material which 'could be seen as possibly supportive of the government and which might be inappropriate as quasi-election material close to an election'. The board discussion was not so circumspect. Rennie said the corporation had been given suspect information regarding both the nature of the 'Rub out the Crim' advertising and the general media perspective of the campaign. It had been told the campaign was for both broadcasting and print media when in fact it was a predominantly television campaign. Inaccurate information had also been given about the advertising for the labour training scheme. The board noted that both campaigns, which were clearly controlled at political rather than departmental levels, dealt with areas in which, according to polls, the public felt the government had been weak. It was concerned that publishing the advertisements without balancing Opposition advertisements could have skewed the situation. Mounter considered it a constitutional rather than merely a broadcasting issue and asked for guidance. Was he required to act as police, judge and jury on the matter of party and government 'misbehaviour'? The understanding that the advertising was a form of programming raised the issue of balance and the need to apply editorial balancing principles if the corporation's objectivity was not to be questioned. A legal opinion from Ted Thomas QC advised that the 'Rub out the Crim' campaign at least had been too overtly political and that the advertisements should be regarded as programming material which did involve the statutory obligation to achieve balance. Formal complaints were laid by the Opposition MP Paul East against the 'Rub out the Crim' campaign and another entitled 'Give School Another Go'. East's complaint was not upheld though at least one board member, Gallaway, thought it should have been. The board resolved to seek from the Rules Committee a new rule to regulate advertisements of this type in the future. But in 1987 campaigns the real finding was that, in spite of the clear understanding of the impropriety of the government's actions, little could be done.¹⁰²

9

REORDERING BROADCASTING

Broadcasting policy was a minor issue in the 1987 election, even though party differences became significant during the year. Early in the year National and Labour were seen as Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Warren Mayne in the *Listener* regarded it as likely, whichever party won, that TV1 'will come closer to being an up-market non-commercial network and that control of the two networks will be separated'.¹ National's policy was closer to this. It included TV2 being sold into private ownership to become a commercial channel in competition with the future TV3. But it accepted that public broadcasting properly belonged on a distinct channel and that channel should be TV1 — if not non-commercial, it would at least have fewer commercials. The same principles were to apply in radio with a sale of RNZ's commercial stations and a retention of the non-commercial stations. Public broadcasting was to consist of various activities, such as parliamentary broadcasts, the transmissions from the Titahi Bay shortwave station and an archives collection but, most importantly, of the broadcasts from the two radio networks, National Radio and the Concert Programme, along with the television channel, TV1.

Commentators, however, had misread Labour's intentions. The party's policy was unclear before the election, though the principles by which Labour was structuring SOEs were well understood and they could be expected to apply to broadcasting. But this was not announced publicly and addressed in detail until 1988 when SOE minister Richard Prebble described the plan as 'the most far-reaching restructuring and deregulation of broadcasting not only in this country but anywhere in the world'.²

COMMERCIAL AND NON-COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING

The Labour government's initial concern was to distinguish between and separate commercial and non-commercial broadcasting. Ron Jarden's 1976 attempts to do this had not been maintained by Ian Cross, who, in the years of static licence fee income, had continued the earlier practice of conflating the two financially in an attempt to allow and fund as much

non-commercial broadcasting as possible. Although commercial broadcasting had been increasingly accentuated in the BCNZ, it had not been clearly distinguished in accounting procedure. On the contrary, there were considerable advantages in keeping commercial and non-commercial activities confused. But things changed under the Lange government. By 1986 the SOE model was established and its implications well understood. It was not then clear the BCNZ would be subject to the SOE Act, but the principles of that legislation became part of a growing political understanding that the long-standing intermingling of commercial and non-commercial activities was unacceptable. The significant financial change made during the years of Rennie's board was to distinguish the BCNZ's commercial and non-commercial activities.

The matter was a particular issue for RNZ which competed with private stations. The extent of cross-subsidisation between RNZ's commercial and non-commercial stations was unknown since the accounting procedures did not allow such knowledge to emerge. It was only late in 1983 that RNZ was asked to prepare separate budgets for its commercial and non-commercial sectors and even then the reason was to have a known basis from which to increase commercial revenue so as to support the non-commercial activities.³ Rennie said it was 1986 before he was able to see a cash-flow statement for the corporation and he considered the organisation fell far short of managing in a financially commercial way. It was a considerable achievement of Rennie's board to introduce accounting procedures which in some areas differentiated between commercial and non-commercial activities and in others at least revealed the nature and extent of the conflation. The new procedures were not introduced entirely willingly since the board was reluctant to abandon cross-subsidisation; Rowley went so far as to argue that if it were lost then editorial control would also disappear. Rennie, however, acknowledged that enthusiasm for what he referred to as 'corporate socialism' was no longer automatic; it was a practice that the board must justify.⁴

By 1988 New Zealand public broadcasting had been in existence for 58 years and had included commercial broadcasting for all but the first six of those years. Commercial and non-commercial activities were interwoven. In pre-television years the profit from commercial radio had subsidised non-commercial activities and had then paid for the development of the four television stations. From the mid-1960s the income from television advertising had taken over this role and the then loss-making commercial radio stations had in their turn begun receiving support, not only from television profits but also from the broadcasting fee income. This became less acceptable as the commercial stations faced private competition and, in response, reduced their role as community stations and concentrated on commercial activity. Strongest opposition to the practice came from the IBA which argued its members competed with RNZ's unfairly subsidised

commercial stations. Private station operators pointed to such matters as the many facilities shared by RNZ stations, commercial and non-commercial, and argued that there was still considerable subsidisation of the commercial stations. The claims were that RNZ costed all it could to National Radio and the Concert Programme, thus allowing its commercial stations to operate without paying a proper share of items such as transmission, the provision of news and general administration and head office costs. Rennie, who spent some years countering the IBA claims, ended by agreeing they had a point. But the amount of cross-subsidisation was not known. Making such a calculation was complex and there were other oddities. The Broadcasting Act, for instance, while defining the licence fee as non-taxable income, allowed the expenditure of that income to count as expenditure for tax purposes, which led to considerable annual tax losses.

RNZ always disputed the IBA claim and in reply pointed to counter-arguments, such as the fact that its training programmes were effectively for the entire industry and therefore a significant subsidy from itself to the private stations. RNZ, which competed with the private stations not only for an audience but also for staff, also felt it was handicapped by the pay scales under which it was required to operate. In 1984 Wakem offered the example of an RNZ sales manager being offered \$90,000, well in advance of RNZ salaries, to join a private station, and said it was time to seriously address the problem of losing highly qualified staff in this way. Little could be done to prevent the courting of staff. Higher salaries were the only real weapon but under the SSC restrictions were not possible. The better RNZ sales staff, in particular, continued to be attracted elsewhere, but the run-down generally was large during the early and mid-1980s, with Wakem acknowledging that, apart from Auckland, station facilities were not being fully used.⁵

That separation between commercial and non-commercial broadcasting was the result of a series of actions taken since the ending of the NZBC in response both to the relative decline in the licence fee income and to the competition from private commercial radio. The changes had accentuated commercial broadcasting and identified it as the corporation's majority activity. What had in the early 1970s still been an undifferentiated 'broadcasting', where commercial stations with their community orientation were justifiably part of the New Zealand tradition of public broadcasting, was by the mid-1980s being seen as commercial and non-commercial. New Zealand was joining the rest of the world in accepting one hallmark of public broadcasting, namely that it is non-commercial. But positive aspects also had to be stressed and this was the job of Rennie's board: to identify the public service activities of the BCNZ which, therefore, were properly funded by the licence fee, and to distinguish these from commercial broadcasting.

The first attempts to make this distinction were done within the new accounting process and they were more successful with regard to RNZ

which had distinct commercial and non-commercial stations. In the corporation's 1987 report there was an attempt to show the distinct expenditure of the public broadcasting fee income. Its change in title from 'television licence fee' was opportune since television was the last corporation activity to benefit from the fee income; TVNZ received what was left after other matters had been catered for. The fee income was first credited against the net cost of the NZSO and then to the non-commercial activities of RNZ, classed as National Radio, the Concert Programme, Access Radio, Maori Radio and Overseas Services. These were separately costed and charged against the fee income. It was the reality of this separation that was contested by private radio owners who argued that many costs which should properly accrue to RNZ's commercial stations were disguised as non-commercial matters.

For TVNZ, however, the separation of commercial and non-commercial activities was even more difficult. The BCNZ charged two of the TVNZ activities against the fee. It was required to extend the TV2 coverage to equal that of TV1 and in the mid-1980s much expenditure went on taking coverage to remote areas. This cost considerably more than the growth in advertising revenue from the increased audience. In its accounts the BCNZ defined its principal television coverage as that which reached 90 per cent of the population and charged the rest against the public broadcasting fee income. There was sense in that allocation since universal coverage had always been an expensive priority for the country's public broadcasting system. But the 90 per cent setting was arbitrary and did not reflect a public or government consensus. Equally arbitrary and without detail or explanation was the second charge against the fee, that for 'New Zealand interest programmes' and 'some overheads'.⁶ This allocation was explained by the fact that local programmes cost more than imports and by the requirement in the act to 'reflect and develop New Zealand's identity and culture'. But it was an ingenuous argument to contend, effectively, that a fully commercial operation would include no New Zealand programming. On the contrary, in the one period when New Zealand television had been in competition — the years when TV1 and SPTV existed — both channels had accentuated local programming as part of their competitive strategies. The distinction between commercial and non-commercial programming on TVNZ remained neither clearly defined nor understood.

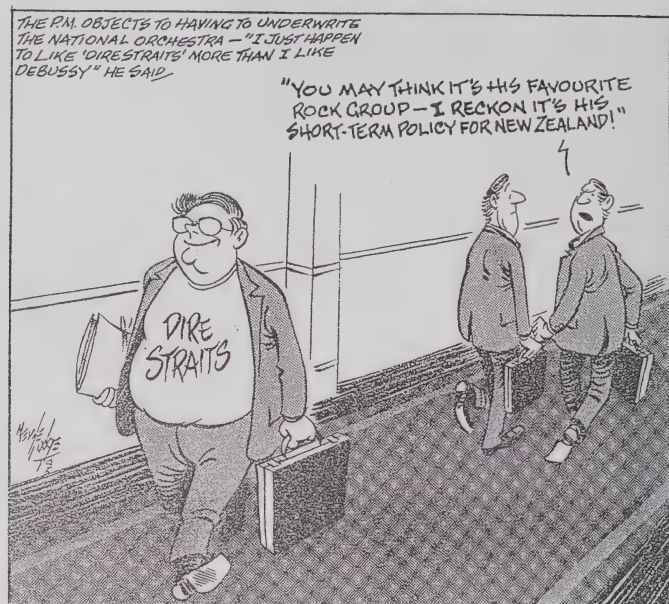
TVNZ was a complex mixture of commercial and public broadcasting. Television had become increasingly an advertising medium in the years since 1972 as the number of channels doubled, the licence fee income shrivelled and the entire BCNZ became increasingly reliant on TVNZ's commercial income. But as the publicly owned and only television broadcaster in the country, TVNZ had never been released from the obligations of public broadcasting. Some of these had not been performed well. Notably, the percentage of local content in programming had been static

for over a decade. But TVNZ was regularly required to act in ways that were in the country's interests but against its own commercial interests. The extension of coverage to the last hamlet in the country was the perennial example quoted. The contemporary example that increasingly irked Rennie's board was the requirement that TVNZ accept the practical and financial responsibility for broadcasting the 1990 Commonwealth Games, a nine-day event scheduled to be held in Auckland. In 1986, while experiencing the disappointment of Labour's fee increase, the board was told it was expected to announce at that year's Edinburgh Games that it would be the host broadcaster at Auckland. To withdraw would have had widespread repercussions and there was no prospect of pulling out. The standard for coverage had been set by the Olympic Games and audience expectations and national prestige required TVNZ to at least approach that standard in Auckland. Considerable expenditure would be required. Unlike the Olympics, however, the Commonwealth Games were not broadcast in Europe and the United States so there was no prospect of a compensating advertising income. In September 1988 the board was told the estimated BCNZ expenditure for the games would be \$14.5 million and the estimated income \$5.3 million.⁷

LABOUR AND PUBLIC RADIO

Lange's government was less supportive of non-commercial radio than any previous Labour administration. In particular it had little regard for the NZSO and the Concert Programme which, though they had a devoted minority following, did not enjoy widespread support. Even within the corporation the NZSO was regarded with little favour. Like their predecessors, Rennie's board regarded the NZSO as a major cultural asset but also as a bottomless financial pit removed from the financial controls the corporation could impose elsewhere. Wakem said that RNZ programming was circumscribed by the extent to which the orchestra was a charge on basic revenue and Mounter made it clear he did not want TVNZ to use the orchestra and so become liable to share the large costs required to support it.⁸

The first Labour government had championed the National Orchestra (as it then was) and accepted the worth of the classical music heritage. The fourth Labour government attacked both the NZSO and the Concert Programme, questioning why an élite and minority interest should be funded by the public broadcasting fee. This view was general in the government and supported by the prime minister himself. David Lange made his allegiances clear with his assertion that he preferred Dire Straits to Debussy. He made various statements against the Concert Programme, asking why listeners to popular music, but not devotees of the Concert Programme, were required to endure commercials.⁹ The same logic was also applied to the equally non-commercial National Radio. Labour's new



Lodge's cartoon in the *Evening Post* accompanying the announcement of David Lange's musical taste. *EVENING POST*

cultural understanding soon became bipartisan. No longer reared to appreciate the classical tradition, the new senior politicians of the 1980s repudiated the long-standing link between political and cultural élites.

National Radio, too, lost government support. Its listeners were also portrayed as unfairly sheltered from commercials. Lack of support for National Radio applied especially to the news and current affairs broadcasts which, though they broadcast on both commercial and non-commercial stations, were principally associated with National Radio. Far from being the arm of government instituted in the 1930s they were an independent force in the land, continually subjecting, among other matters, government action to scrutiny. Labour and National governments alike found no joy in the relationship. RNZ's journalism had considerable public support and, though not immune from assault, was generally able to stand against political opposition. It became clear, however, that Lange's government, unlike its predecessors, recognised no special need to support RNZ's journalism. It was, in the government's view, the same as commercial,

especially newspaper, journalism and should be subject to similar market disciplines.

MAORI BROADCASTING

It was one thing to denigrate the activities of public broadcasting. It was another and a more powerful argument to suggest that public broadcasting had failed even to engage in certain important activities. In the Lange years by far the strongest attacks on public broadcasting were made in regard to Maori broadcasting. There was a strengthening understanding that not only the BCNZ and its predecessors, but New Zealand society and its governments generally, had failed the Maori people.

Although Rennie's board ultimately had little success with Maori broadcasting, the difficulties were beyond its control; that did not, however, prevent the BCNZ being held responsible. The board, more than its predecessors, had what Corban called a great fund of goodwill for the Maori people.¹⁰ With two Maori, Katerina Mataira and Tipene O'Regan, on the board, Maori interests were better served at that level. After the 1984 election, Maori broadcasting was one of the matters substantially reconsidered by the board. But though the BCNZ in general accepted that change was needed, the range of views was diverse.

RNZ representatives felt they were at 'a crunch point' with their Maori programming and new decisions were needed. Maori and Polynesian programming had deliberately been placed on National Radio around 7pm as this caused the least disturbance to established listener habits. The general audience switched to television in the evenings and radio listening became the preserve of those interested in specialist programmes. Although it was acknowledged that this position was unsuitable for the Maori audience which not only watched television in the evening but, when it did listen to radio, concentrated overwhelmingly on the commercial stations, RNZ was unwilling to put Maori programming on the commercial stations. Maori programming was not widely accepted and there was considerable opposition to it from advertisers. Some clients took strong exception even to the introduction of Maori phrases on air by announcers and others.¹¹ RNZ was afraid of jeopardising the commercial stations' main task, namely earning revenue from advertising. Further, though RNZ saw Maori programming as a priority, the board was not prepared to begin broadcasts from 1YB, the Auckland vehicle for Maori programming, before the 1ZM AM transmitter was released. In the circumstances, RNZ felt it should concentrate on increasing the number of Maori interest items in its English language programmes, especially news. The TVNZ orientation was similar. TVNZ appointed an additional member to its *Te Karere* staff, the Maori news programme, thus allowing it to be extended to eight minutes. But this was apart from what the TVNZ programmers felt should be their main Maori



The *Kōhā* programme broadcasters pictured in 1983. From left, Selwyn Muru, Aroaro Hond, Michael Evans, Fran Davey, Robert Pouwhare, Mona Papali'i, Ernie Leonard, Brent Leslie and Rameka Cope. NZMA

orientation. Rather than distinct programmes specifically for Maori, TVNZ proposed to establish a Maori presence by carrying Maori themes and concerns across the whole range of programmes.

These views were opposed within the BCNZ, particularly by the Maori personnel. The corporation had few Maori staff and even fewer in senior positions able to influence programme decisions. Those who could argued for the worth of distinct Maori programming. Ernie Leonard, the senior Maori figure within TVNZ, pointed to the audience figures of 400,000 to 500,000 for *Kōhā* as evidence of a widespread interest in Maori matters. Haare Williams, the senior Maori within RNZ, spoke of the success of Australia's Special Broadcasting Service in helping to revive Aboriginal language and culture and suggested establishing such a unit in Auckland to cater for the needs of Maori and other minority audiences.

The entire debate took a new, and for the BCNZ, unexpected turn when representatives of the Maori Council met the board in 1985 and announced they had decided to apply for the warrant to run the third television channel. The TVNZ and RNZ proposals, for a greater Maori input into existing stations, might have been acceptable a decade earlier but nothing had been done and different action was now required. The council opposed private control of a third channel: it would lead to more rather than better broadcasting and would jeopardise the capacity of the public broadcasting system to fulfil its obligations. Having the third channel as a public broadcasting outlet in Maori hands, however, would lead to better broadcasting as well as meeting the needs of the Maori people. The council proposed the third channel be a separate and independent entity under Maori control with resources directed to it from the BCNZ; the corporation would lose that money anyway should a competitive private third channel be established. The proposal was to broadcast for five to seven hours a day for the first one and a half to two

and a half years, carrying limited commercials for the first five to seven years and then increasing. The channel was not expected to be commercially successful and the Maori Council suggested some 15 per cent of BCNZ revenue be directed to it.

After the deputation left Cross argued that it would be impossible not to adopt a position on the Maori Council approach. The board agreed but saw no need to do so immediately. Members considered the Maori Council proposal to be out of line with the government's perception of what was required. Rennie pointed out that because the board's submission to the Royal Commission needed to include its views on multicultural broadcasting that was the appropriate place to address the many issues raised by the Maori Council.¹²

But it was the Waitangi Tribunal rather than the Royal Commission that raised the topic to considerable public prominence. This was as part of the tribunal's investigation into the Maori language and a claim that it should be accorded official status. The tribunal's findings were reported in 1986. Under the 1953 Maori Affairs Act the language had been given official recognition as 'the ancestral tongue' of those of Maori descent, but the Waitangi Tribunal saw this as 'an empty provision' that did no more than state the obvious. The use of Maori had been declining for years. Wiremu Parker, reader of the Maori news from its start in 1943 until 1972, found so few people in Wellington with whom he could converse in Maori that he often read the Maori Bible to gain the rhythm of speaking before making a broadcast. In 1959, during a North Island survey, Parker was shocked to discover the extent to which English had replaced Maori as the language of communication in the home.¹³ By the 1980s it was feared that the Maori language was in danger of lapsing into complete disuse. After education, broadcasting was the largest single topic covered in the evidence before the Waitangi Tribunal, with considerable support for the charge that the BCNZ had not provided adequately for its Maori audience. This view had strengthened since the 1970s and the failure to implement the recommendation from the Adam committee for an Auckland-based Polynesian radio station. The failure was regarded as applicable to television as much as to radio. Indeed then BCNZ board member, Howard Morrison, had taken much of the gloss from the 25th anniversary celebrations for TVNZ by using the occasion to lambaste TVNZ for its second-class treatment of Maori. The tribunal was certain that the predominance of English in the media had had an adverse effect on the Maori language but declined to make any recommendations before the Broadcasting Tribunal and the Royal Commission had announced their own findings. It left the corporation to govern its own affairs but 'by way of assistance' suggested that an inquiry would not be out of place.¹⁴

The BCNZ did not hold an inquiry but waited for events to unfold and for a lead from the government. Maori programming could be in either

English or Maori. Many regarded broadcasting as a necessary vehicle to promote the Maori language's survival and resurgence, but the corporation had been particularly reluctant to extend Maori language programming. The board held that any emphasis on Maori language programming should not take precedence over spreading general knowledge of things Maori. In earlier discussions one board member went so far as to question whether an emphasis on Maori language broadcasting might create dangerous social divisions in New Zealand.¹⁵ In earlier years separate Maori programming was regarded as inappropriate in a broadcasting service designed to promote national unity. Although that understanding no longer ruled, it had been replaced by a commercial imperative to seek the widest possible audience.

AOTEAROA BROADCASTING SYSTEM

In mid-1985, the BCNZ board met representatives of the Aotearoa Broadcasting System (ABS), the organisation that had sprung from the Maori Council proposal to bid for the third television channel. The ABS representatives, aware of the Waitangi Tribunal hearings and claims that the policies of government institutions, including the BCNZ, had not been consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi, aimed to redress the balance and proposed broadcasting a schedule of one-third Maori language, one-third New Zealand-produced English language and one-third imported English language programmes. Derek Fox, speaking for the ABS, had no concerns about the viability of a Maori third channel. He claimed that by the year 2000 30 per cent of the New Zealand population would be Maori, giving the ABS both an audience and a population base no advertiser could ignore. The ABS sought practical and financial support from the board and a statement from it to the Broadcasting Tribunal that the ABS application was a feasible proposition by a non-profit-making organisation.

Further Maori representations came in November 1985 from the Broadcasting Committee of the Maori Economic Development Commission. Armed with a letter from the minister of broadcasting, the group sought equity, autonomy and the redressing of past imbalances. By equity they meant an acceptance that Maori were 15 per cent of the population and should therefore have a commensurate portion of the resources. The Maori representation wanted effective affirmative action from the BCNZ, especially in the area of training. This would be culturally attuned for Maori entering broadcasting and the group recommended an Aotearoa Broadcasting Centre under the auspices of the ABS to train 120 Maori a year in multifunctional skills, with half the funding to come from the BCNZ. As with the earlier representation from the Maori Council, the group wanted broadcasting autonomy for Maori. The proposed relationship with the BCNZ was unclear. Although the group accepted that auton-

omy entailed answerability to the board, they said they could answer only to people who were bilingual.¹⁶

At this stage the board made a decision that accepted the argument from the Maori Council that separate Maori control of distinct publicly owned broadcasting outlets was required, thus reversing the long-standing policy of central and monopoly control. It was a decision made for both television and radio. In neither case did the BCNZ have the authority to change the existing arrangement of public broadcasting — only the Broadcasting Tribunal and the government could do that — but the corporation did make its new policy clear and, albeit in radio far more than in television, did support the attempted establishment of separate Maori broadcasting.

In television, the BCNZ also had an interest in supporting the ABS bid for the third television channel. The corporation always accepted that it was highly unlikely to be given that warrant itself but knew that the ABS was the least likely of the various contenders to disturb TVNZ's audience domination: Monaghan estimated that the ABS would take only 2 to 3 per cent of the total available audience on a sustained basis. On pragmatic grounds alone, therefore, the BCNZ was inclined towards the ABS proposal. But added to this was a genuine recognition of the needs of the Maori people and of the requirements of the Broadcasting Act. Cross, arguing that the BCNZ could satisfy neither within the predominantly commercial two-channel system, favoured supporting the ABS as a means of meeting them. Rennie judged the ABS request as within the corporation's legal powers and it was decided that Cross would reach an agreement with the ABS. The BCNZ would provide transmission of the ABS signal at no cost to the ABS, at least while there was no other commercial channel in operation, and the BCNZ would give the ABS cash grants amounting to around 15 per cent of the aggregated revenue of the three channels.¹⁷

That, however, was the high point in the BCNZ support for a Maori channel. Nine months later, in 1986, the board received further representations from the ABS asking for more funding. Rather than accepting these, the board reconsidered and finally severed its relationship with the ABS. The overall financial state for television was worse than it had been when the ABS plans were laid. The assumed market growth was not taking place and the board had second thoughts about the wisdom of its support for the ABS. Rather than supporting the ABS, the board now felt its best option would be to oppose the granting of any third channel. Even if a third warrant were given, the board wondered whether it might not be better to take on a commercial opponent and fight them in the marketplace.

The board had grown increasingly doubtful about the realism of the ABS proposal. It questioned whether the application conformed to the regional television requirements and also queried the financial acumen of the ABS. The board saw the ABS request for further funds as altering the

whole situation. In particular the ABS sought a \$24 million loan; this would require a government guarantee, something Rennie could not envisage being granted. Recognising that the ABS had no realistic hope of getting the third channel warrant and that the BCNZ could not continue to support it financially, the board thought it likely that the ABS would withdraw its application. Even if the ABS did continue and gain a warrant, the BCNZ would not give it the financial support it had previously contemplated.

On the other hand, the BCNZ view of ABS's financial status was much disputed by Derek Fox, Ari Paul and Whatarangi Winiata, the major figures within the ABS. Winiata, an accountancy professor from Victoria University, was adamant that ABS had its money and deserved the corporation's support.¹⁸ The withdrawal of support considerably worsened the relationship between the BCNZ and Maoridom, already soured from the years of inaction since the promise of Radio Polynesia in the 1970s.

The ABS continued with its application but the Broadcasting Tribunal turned it down, judging the ABS 'financial and commercial ability was not convincing'. Like the BCNZ, the tribunal did not accept the ABS estimate of its likely audience and judged, 'There would have been frustration with a service which was likely to attract tiny audiences and have little influence on the vast majority of the population.' A disappointed Derek Fox called the tribunal decision 'racist' and 'patronising'.¹⁹

TVNZ AND MAORI BROADCASTING

The board recognised that its withdrawal of support for the ABS would provoke an adverse reaction from Maori and would need to be accompanied by a package demonstrating the BCNZ's commitment to the enhancement of Maori broadcasting. Nigel Dick also felt that the BCNZ needed to set a quota for Maori programming on the grounds that if it did not it was likely to have one imposed on it. In TVNZ Julian Mounter announced he intended to increase Maori programming as a matter of priority. The board supported the TVNZ plan and hoped that, in the foreseeable future, 5 per cent of local productions would be in the Maori language.²⁰

In the months before Dick's and Mounter's appointments the corporation had decided to change its administration of Maori television programme production and proposed setting up a Maori production unit. The concept received considerable and outspoken criticism, especially from Derek Fox of the Maori Broadcasters' Association. Partly in response to this, the proposal was upgraded to become the Maori production department and opened early in 1986. In an acknowledgment of a serious shortage of Maori programme staff in TVNZ, its budget for the first year was marked predominantly for staff recruitment and training.²¹ When Dick and

Mounter arrived, Ernie Leonard was appointed the inaugural head of the department and from 1 April 1986 responsibility for Maori programming moved to the new department from the General and Special Interest Department. In addition, TVNZ advertised for a Maori cultural and planning adviser to the director-general and Mounter appointed Ripeka Evans to the position. Evans, a wahine toa in many Maori eyes and regarded by many Pakeha as an activist, was a controversial choice, provoking considerable public and parliamentary debate. But the appointment indicated the seriousness of Mounter's intent and was followed by the announcement of a three-year programme to increase Maori staff to 12 per cent of the corporation total, meaning an increase from the mid-50s to around 400, and to raise Maori programming to 12 per cent of total programming, meaning almost a five-fold increase.²² Late in 1987, 50 Maori were selected for the corporation's Kimihia training programme but because the BCNZ no longer existed at the end of the three-year period, the success of its programme was not evaluated.

Nga Take Maori, a 10-programme Maori current affairs series hosted by Hone Kaa, which began in November 1986, was the first regularly scheduled programme to be broadcast in Maori with English subtitles. A second series followed and other new programmes were added: *Waka Huia* and *Kohanga Reo*, and a continuation of *Koha*. There were 120 hours of Maori programming over the 1987 season, a large increase on previous years. But the long-standing disagreements about Maori programming continued. The audience ratings for the new programmes were low, which corporation officials took to reflect low public interest in Maori programmes, while supporters considered the scheduling — *Waka Huia* was broadcast at 10am on Sundays and *Nga Take Maori* at 10pm on Sundays — gave a kiss of death to the programmes. TVNZ considered itself unable to screen what it saw as minority programming in prime time; this was derided by Maori broadcasters and their supporters. Clearly, no acceptable compromise was possible in the current system. An entirely different initiative was required.

RNZ MAORI BROADCASTING

Like its television counterpart, RNZ also accepted the principle of separate Maori stations. In the case of radio, the proposal was for a complete network of Maori stations. This became a tentative BCNZ policy late in 1985 when the board accepted the RNZ idea to investigate establishing a Maori radio network, funded by the BCNZ and by sponsorship support. The network was to have a popular music base and would operate with at least a 50 per cent Maori language content. The Maori representation from the Broadcasting Committee of the Maori Economic Development Commission agreed with and welcomed the RNZ proposal but also

expressed their interest in applying for a warrant to use the 630kHz frequency in Auckland for a Maori radio station in that city. Wakem, the RNZ director-general, welcomed that initiative.²³

In July 1986 the board decided to go ahead with establishing the Maori Radio Network. Board Member Tipene O'Regan, speaking in Maori, recorded his immense satisfaction, congratulating his colleagues on the importance and significance of their decision. It was a difficult step to take. Although the board accepted that the network was worthwhile and necessary, it did require the BCNZ to surrender its control over the stations in the network while probably retaining financial responsibility. The board felt that, because the proposed network was a social service that allowed for only limited commercial content, it should be government funded. It resolved to approach the government for the funding either as a capital grant or as an increase in the licence fee. Realising that government funding was uncertain at best, the board made a further commitment: to establish the network anyway so that it did not lose credibility with Maoridom. The board would meet the costs, which would be high, by rearranging its public service priorities. There was an estimated set-up cost of \$1.7 million and the board acknowledged that annual costs for a full network could be equivalent to the yearly cost of the NZSO.

Government reaction was lukewarm. The government accepted the establishment of what was first called the Maori Network Board, then the Maori Radio Board, then, in early 1988, the Aotearoa Maori Radio Board (AMRB), but gave no additional funding. Nor did it want to be involved in appointments to the AMRB for fear that it might find itself committed to supporting an incompetent organisation. Wiremu Ohia was appointed chairman and his deputy was board member Tipene O'Regan.²⁴

Ohia met the board in July 1987 and notified it that the AMRB had both confirmed the network philosophy and decided that any warrant applications would be for AM stations. At the same meeting the board was told of moves being made to encourage the withdrawal of Maori staff from both RNZ and TVNZ. These, presumably, were designed to prevent the corporation from producing Maori programmes and therefore force it to purchase them. Ohia supported the board's two Maori members, O'Regan and Mataira, who argued the board must meet such a challenge. The AMRB itself, however, dealt the corporation a blow when it appointed Haare Williams as its general manager. Maori staff were in short supply and the departure of such an experienced broadcaster was a blow to RNZ. A further and severe blow to both the AMRB and the BCNZ was dealt when the Department of Maori Affairs announced it would not be keeping its previous promise of giving the board \$306,000 for training purposes. It left the corporation as the sole source of supply for the Maori board.

The Maori desire for full autonomy was stated again when Ohia later suggested to the board that the AMRB should become a Maori Broad-



The seal of the first Maori radio station.

casting Corporation. The board made no decision as ministerial approval was required for what would be a new and independent entity. Rennie discussed the proposal with the minister and reported him as neither for nor against.²⁵

The AMRB wished to begin broadcasting in Auckland, but it was beaten to first Maori radio station status by Wellington's Te Upoko o Te Ika, established in 1987 when it broadcast for the two months of May and June from Wellington Access Radio. The station returned for five days in December and broadcast from April to December in 1988. The station was given considerable outside assistance. By June 1988 it had received \$2,000 from the AMRB and RNZ calculated it had given the station \$100,000 in cash or kind. Nigel Dick said there would be no more money.²⁶

The start of Te Upoko o Te Ika brought to the fore a dispute within Maoridom about the appropriate style of radio. The AMRB favoured a national network based in Auckland with further transmitters eventually from Northland to Canterbury. Countering this was a desire for separate iwi stations. Many Maori regarded such tribally based stations as in tune with the nature of Maori society and derided the proposed network as a Pakeha-style approach that would smother tribal diversity. Protesting to the Broadcasting Tribunal on behalf of Te Upoko o Te Ika, where he spoke against the application for a network, Huirangi Waikerepura claimed, 'It is the net that will destroy the fish.'²⁷ The Wellington station itself had problems in this dispute. Although regionally based, it was a multiracial station reflecting the urban nature of Wellington and the migra-

tion to there of Maori from many iwi. Wellington's Te Atiawa made it clear, however, that their acceptance of the station was not at the cost of their wish to begin another station later to meet their iwi needs.

Maori enthusiasm for iwi stations was obvious. No permanent stations were begun but the Broadcasting Tribunal gave a number of short-term authorisations.²⁸ Sacrifices were required by the new broadcasters, as was shown by Ruatoria's station, Te Reo Irirangi o Ngati Porou. It received no BCNZ or AMRB funding and staff were required to work without pay. Such dedication indicated the high regard for tribal radio but it was not a broadcasting style that could exist long term.

The AMRB's Auckland station, Radio Aotearoa, began its broadcasts in August 1988. The AMRB received considerable support from the BCNZ — the final accounts show \$711,000 paid to the AMRB between April and November 1988²⁹ — but in spite of this the AMRB experienced serious financial difficulties. The BCNZ board was told that a large part of the problem was the very high salaries being paid, up to double the comparable rates at other stations. Although not querying the AMRB programming, the board instituted measures to introduce sound financial and management control. This, however, was at the end of the BCNZ era and AMRB funding and control was addressed under the new regime.³⁰

Distinctive Maori radio did begin during the final years of the BCNZ, and was accepted and assisted by Rennie's board, but the changes came late in the BCNZ era after the government had decided to change the administration of broadcasting generally. Further, by supporting the AMRB, the BCNZ placed itself on one side, the weaker side, of a dispute over the proper arrangements for Maori radio. The political and public perception, especially from Maori, was that the corporation's actions were too little and too late. The relative lack of action was due more to the failure of governments from 1972 to advance sufficient funding for public broadcasting in general and Maori broadcasting in particular. The result, however, reinforced the view that the requirements of public broadcasting could not be met under the BCNZ regime.

THE BCNZ PREPARES

Before the 1987 election the BCNZ board accepted that, whatever party won, deregulation would follow. As Corban noted, that path had been signalled by the government in many areas other than broadcasting, and the reason lay in New Zealand's dire financial circumstances; the government could no longer afford its previous level of support. Other than that, no rational philosophical justification had been advanced for the dramatic change in public policy.³¹ From late 1987 the board knew the government planned a major restructuring of TVNZ and RNZ, probably involving the ending of the BCNZ itself so many of its actions were made in anticipation

of that change and to prepare its radio and television organisations to survive and prosper in the new environment. The greater changes were made within TVNZ where Julian Mounter, with the board's support, led a series of initiatives. The changes had begun in the preparation of TVNZ for competition with TV3 and continued with a reordering of the company.

A major instance of the new approach was the board's July 1988 resolution to close the TVNZ drama section entirely and instead to set up its own production company. South Pacific Pictures was begun with \$1 million capital from the BCNZ. Rennie and Corban alternated as chairmen, with Wakem, Mounter and A. T. Gray as directors. Monaghan was managing director but only for some months before he resigned and was replaced by John McRae. The change indicated a new orientation as TVNZ accentuated its role as a television programmer rather than programme producer. The change could not be total — there was still a lot of sense in TVNZ continuing to produce a range of regular, live programmes, particularly news, current affairs and sports — but the intermittent programmes could be bought more cheaply than they could be produced in house. This had been recognised earlier with the appointment of a TVNZ commissioning editor. Although many of the TVNZ staff from the drama section were involved in South Pacific Pictures, their working situation was very different, especially as they were not employed full time. South Pacific Pictures' few executive staff were on year-to-year contracts and everyone else was hired on a project by project basis.

South Pacific Pictures had an intimate association with TVNZ and became a major television production company in New Zealand, but it was only one among many others and its relationship with TVNZ was essentially economic. If others could produce equivalent programmes more cheaply, they would more likely gain the contracts. This was a significant change which signalled, even more than the appointment of a commissioning editor, the acceptance of independent production houses. Of at least equal significance for the nature of television broadcasting was the understanding that future drama productions were no longer to be made just for a New Zealand audience. For Monaghan, the key to success for South Pacific Pictures lay in making productions that met the needs of at least two countries simultaneously. To further this ambition, the board required at least 50 per cent of funding for each project to come from sources other than the BCNZ.³² New Zealand television drama, always an irregular commodity at best, was now reshaped to conform to the wants and needs of other television countries and markets.

A further innovation by TVNZ was the introduction, in 1988, of what was called New Zealand's first narrowcasting television service. Developed in association with brewery giant, Lion Nathan, this was a series of programmes aimed at hotels and clubs and available at an opening cost of \$160 a week. The programmes, mainly sports, popular music and horse

racing information, were produced by Comunicado Communications, by then a major independent.

The board also decided to enter the market for subscription or pay television, thus ending the long policy that its broadcasts were free to air and could be received by all sets within transmission range. Pay television, whereby one or more programmes are transmitted in an encoded form and available only to subscribers who have paid for the use of a decoding device, existed in many parts of the world and was the fastest growing sector of the television industry. Its extension to New Zealand was made likely from 1986 when the UHF band was allocated to television, greatly increasing the number of programmes that could be transmitted simultaneously: 49 channels were now available in addition to the 11 in the VHF band. The BCNZ's corporate director of engineering interpreted that as allowing up to six extra television programmes, at least three of which could give nationwide coverage. And the UHF allocation in New Zealand was such that each channel had 15 per cent more capacity than on VHF, allowing improved picture quality and extra sound channels or the simultaneous transmission of other data.³³ The board resolved, in May 1988, to enter the subscription/pay television market and investigated possible ventures, including a consortium with partners including Australia's Channel Ten. Three months later it agreed, subject to ministerial approval, to spend \$5.5 million on purchasing up to 15 UHF transmitters, translators and associated linking equipment. Speed was essential: the first to enter the pay television market would 'lock it up' and corner a considerable revenue service.³⁴ The entry into pay television was continued by the TVNZ board after the BCNZ was dismantled and culminated in the May 1990 launching of Sky Network Television Ltd, in which TVNZ had a 35 per cent shareholding.

REDEFINING PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Such changes were made in anticipation of the Lange government's restructuring of broadcasting. Acknowledging that it would become an SOE, the board was positioning what became TVNZ Ltd for a sound commercial future. It was also concerned, however, to secure the future of public broadcasting. In Corban's words, 'the pragmatism of survival' was taken very seriously. The board wanted the BCNZ to become a single SOE, in the words of one board member, Magner, 'a strong, viable, national carrier'. This would leave a single authority in control of publicly owned radio and television but even the board accepted this outcome was unlikely.³⁵

Before announcing its policy, the government heard submissions via a parliamentary select committee and called for a report from the Steering Committee on Broadcasting, appointed to look at the restructuring of the

BCNZ on SOE principles. In what he regarded as the high point of the BCNZ rearguard action, Rennie was appointed as chairman of that committee. As chief executive of the BCNZ, Nigel Dick considered he should also have been a member, but the government had no intention of appointing two people from the corporation. This was a further disappointment for Dick who resigned and returned to Australia. His position had always been difficult. The job had been devised for Ian Cross when the Lange government declined to continue his appointment as chairman, but it is doubtful whether it should have been continued after Cross's retirement. Dick was much circumscribed by TVNZ and RNZ, the BCNZ's two broadcasters, both with competent and powerful directors-general loath to concede any of their authority. The relationship with Mounter was particularly difficult since the two men had different understandings of their authority over TVNZ's operations. Dick resigned over what were called 'irreconcilable differences with the corporation's board'.³⁶ The matter came before the board after Dick attempted to fire Mounter. In a long meeting on 8 June 1988 the board accepted Mounter's argument that only it could fire the director-general and it declined to do so. This was a final indignity for Dick. Clearly unsatisfied with the board's decision, he was equally unhappy with his non-appointment to the steering committee and inability to influence the future of public broadcasting. He resigned and was replaced by Beverley Wakem who was appointed acting chief executive on 28 June 1988. The board acknowledged that she might expect a painful time.³⁷

Much of the government's decision became public in its terms of reference for the steering committee. The BCNZ board, wanting public broadcasting to continue, attempted, more than any of its predecessors, to define that elusive concept. This contentious task was done in competition with another group addressing the same issue, the Officials Economic Committee which reported to the Cabinet Economic Committee.

The BCNZ saw public broadcasting as encompassing seven duties: to maintain and develop broadcasting as a system of human communication to serve the people of New Zealand; to reflect and develop the identity and culture by obtaining, commissioning, and broadcasting a range of programmes to inform, educate and entertain the people of New Zealand; to ensure that the people of New Zealand have access to two television channels and a range of radio services; to ensure that the people of New Zealand have access to television and radio broadcasting services offering a range of programmes which will cater in a balanced way for the varied interests of different sections of the community; to ensure that the people of New Zealand have access to television and radio broadcasting services offering accurate and impartial gathering and treatment of news and current affairs, according to recognised standards of objective journalism; to ensure that the people of New Zealand have access to television and radio



The BCNZ board at its final meeting in November 1988. From left, Katarina Mataira, J. B. Swinburn, Barbara Magner, S. G. (Tipene) O'Regan, Hugh Rennie, Richard Rowley, Brian Corban, Kay Sharlotte and Iain Galloway.

broadcasting services that are presented with due regard to the need for good taste and decency and the rights of the individual; and to provide for trustees of the national interest in broadcasting to advise government on the development of its public service broadcasting policy to operate with maximum independence in implementing the government's public service broadcasting policy and to account to Parliament for its trusteeship.

The corporation wanted these seven points adopted as minimum public service broadcasting objectives in the government's review of broadcasting policy.³⁸ But the officials' committee had a different view. Although noting that further work was required to define the objectives more closely, the committee saw public broadcasting more simply as maintaining universal access (as near as practicable) to at least one television channel and one radio network, and promoting New Zealand content, minority interest and community information programmes on television and radio.

The government reproduced the first six of the corporation's seven duties in the terms of reference for the steering committee as the 'Social/Public Service objectives' for broadcasting. This, however, this was a minor victory since the government rejected the BCNZ view on two major points. The government did not accept the BCNZ's seventh public broadcasting duty. It decided that, rather than from independent trustees reporting to Parliament, its broadcasting policy advice would 'be vested in the Department of Trade and Industry/Ministry of Commerce'. Also, the government endorsed the view of its officials' committee when deciding how to meet public broadcasting objectives. The terms of reference included the previously announced government decision that 'public service broadcasting objectives will be met through a system of publicly funded grants . . . to be administered through a Broadcasting Commission', a new way of distributing the income from the public broadcasting licence fee.

The broadcasting commission concept indicates just how far from the government's policy preferences the BCNZ was. It strongly opposed the commission but various submissions argued just as strongly *for* it. Among those in favour was Dave Gibson, inaugural chairman of the Independent Producers' and Directors' Guild (IPDG), representing the independent production houses. Always existing perilously, with little employment in broadcasting, the independent production houses fell on hard times from 1984 as the Labour government removed the tax advantages of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The IPDG wanted more opportunities to make television programmes and its submission turned on the method of payment of the broadcasting licence fee money, traditionally given as a single sum to the BCNZ. The BCNZ expected that the fee money would continue to be paid to the new SOE or SOEs. In other words, TVNZ and RNZ would continue to receive that sum, though the advent of TV3 brought the suggestion that it would also receive a share. The IPDG wanted to change the basis of funding and, rather than pay networks, wanted the focus to be using the fee money to fund individual productions. This suggestion was also made by Treasury and received sympathetically since it sat well with a basic principle of New Zealand's economic restructuring, that there be a division between the purchasers and providers of services. The submission evolved into the Broadcasting Commission, an organisation with the basic function of apportioning its income, the broadcasting fee money, to fund the production of particular programmes deemed necessary to meet the requirements of public broadcasting. RNZ and TVNZ could bid for funding to make particular programmes, but the fee money was no longer theirs of right.

Among the submissions to the select committee was one from Media Women. At their first meetings with the officials' committee they were dismayed at the free market enthusiasm. After being told conditions would be so open that women could have their own television channel, they decided the officials had little understanding of economic realism as it applied to radio and television station ownership and made a submission to the select committee considering Labour's Broadcasting Act. They made much reference to Canadian material where there was a particularly strong code concerning how women should be portrayed on television. Media Women supported the establishment of both a Broadcasting Commission and a Broadcasting Standards Authority. They considered the authority should have significant regulatory powers and supported the commission being required to ensure that programming paid heed to such as women and minority groups. Speaking of the final act, Mary Varnham said, 'We saw some of our wording in there'.³⁹

The BCNZ board opposed the concept of the Broadcasting Commission, considering it meant the end of independent corporation control of its broadcasts. Once it was clear the government was committed to the

commission, the BCNZ then argued that its funds should be granted principally to the publicly owned broadcaster or broadcasters. The officials believed that all those interested should be able to bid competitively for the funds. The government accepted its officials' view though, in practice, the BCNZ view did indicate the future for radio.

Founding the Broadcasting Commission signalled a fundamental change in the understanding of public broadcasting. Rather than programming from a publicly owned broadcaster or broadcasters allowed to operate independently, it was to be specific programmes commissioned, under yet to be determined methods, from any producer. In a prescient comment, Beatson, the *Listener* managing editor, considered the corporation was being asked first to design 'a lean mean commercial broadcaster' and then to show what such a broadcaster could not do and what it would cost to make up that deficiency.⁴⁰ The Broadcasting Commission was to perform that role. Under the new philosophy it was accepted that the usual style of broadcasting was commercial. In the public interest, that style was leavened with some programmes being partly funded by the Broadcasting Commission. Whether such programmes would receive their entire costs from the commission was yet to be decided but there was no suggestion they would be broadcast without accompanying advertising. The government accepted that the normal and proper style of broadcasting was commercial, with the commission added to the mix in order to make available various programmes that would not normally be viable.

NEW LEGISLATION

The new order for broadcasting was legislated in a flurry of activity beginning with the Broadcasting Amendment Act, No. 2, of November 1988 and ending with the Radiocommunications Act of December 1989. In the first piece of legislation, the BCNZ was dissolved and two new entities, RNZ Limited and TVNZ Limited, were added to the number of SOEs governed by the SOE Act of 1986. The ministers of finance and state-owned enterprises were designated the shareholders. Ministers of the Crown were unable to give directions in respect of programmes, including news and current affairs, or complaints, or programme standards. Otherwise the new SOEs were governed as were all other SOEs. Two BCNZ board members, Corban and Rowley, were announced as chairmen of the TVNZ Ltd and RNZ Ltd transition boards. They continued their roles into the new era as heads of the new companies.⁴¹ Mounter continued as chief executive of TVNZ Ltd and Wakem was appointed chief executive of RNZ Ltd when it started on 1 December 1989.

As part of these changes, the PSA's power over broadcasting was removed. This had been fought for by many earlier broadcasting executives since 1961 but with only limited success. Ian Cross was no supporter of

the Lange government's changes to broadcasting but he did acknowledge as a good outcome the breakdown of the PSA control of broadcasting staffing. The ending of the PSA dominance in broadcasting was a significant instance of Labour's turning away from its traditional union support base. Ironically, the change was administered by Stan Rodger, the minister of labour and himself a former president of the PSA.

In a separate act, and in rejection of the steering committee's recommendation, the NZSO was deemed to be a separate SOE in its own right. The committee recognised the NZSO was not and would not be commercially profitable. It wanted the greater part of the orchestra's costs paid directly by the government but still wanted an NZSO retained in RNZ and operating, with the Concert Programme, as a distinct business unit. Such an association was designed to take the orchestra's performances, via FM, beyond the few cities in which it performed live. The government did not accept this. In the NZSO Act the minister of broadcasting was one of the shareholding ministers of the new enterprise. Otherwise there was no connection with broadcasting. The NZSO remains a national asset but its status as a profit-making commercial enterprise is inappropriate and a matter of wishful thinking. It exists on money appropriated by Parliament.

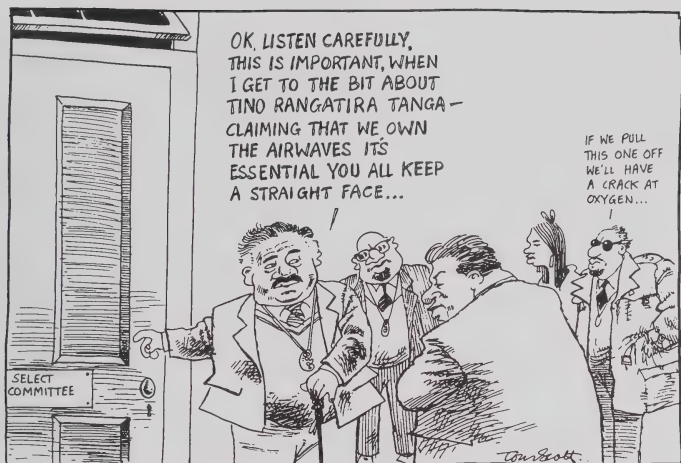
The Broadcasting Act of 1989 instituted the Broadcasting Standards Authority and the Broadcasting Commission. It also dealt with various other matters, most importantly the broadcasting rights of non-New Zealanders, parliamentary election broadcasting and advertising. The act defined restrictions on overseas interests broadcasting in New Zealand or owning New Zealand radio or television stations. For parliamentary elections, the existing situation was repeated: free broadcasting time had to be given to political parties during elections. The debates in the BCNZ over whether political parties should be allowed to purchase further time were settled with a statement that broadcasting time could not be bought for electioneering. Advertising was not permitted on Sundays on television between 6am and noon; in other words, seven-day advertising was finally introduced, with commercials allowed all Sunday on radio and from noon on television.

Unlike the Broadcasting Tribunal, the Broadcasting Standards Authority is not a warranting body, but, like the tribunal, it is responsible for receiving and deciding on complaints. The authority is funded by an appropriation from Parliament and complaint adjudication is its main power. Its other functions are advisory rather than mandatory. It issues advisory opinions on broadcasting standards and ethical conduct in broadcasting and encourages the development of codes of practice on matters from the protection of children and portrayal of violence to the correction of factual errors and the presentation of appropriate warnings regarding programmes. It also conducts research on broadcasting standards.

The major innovation in the Broadcasting Act was the Broadcasting Commission. It, rather than the actual broadcasters, had to ensure that various matters, previously regarded as among the aims of public broadcasting, were met. It received all the income from the public broadcasting fee and could also receive any other money Parliament decided to appropriate. Its duties effectively defined the practice of public broadcasting. The first of these was coverage; where appropriate, the commission had to ensure that radio and television coverage extended beyond the range of the commercially viable. In programming the commission was required to provide New Zealand material that catered for New Zealand interests. This was a notable change from earlier understandings of public broadcasting programming. Rather than excellence in programming, public broadcasting programming was now defined as local content *per se*, with no qualifications regarding the nature or quality of that local content. There had been a historical reluctance and increasing inability to maintain a high level of local content within broadcasting, but this major change placed New Zealand at odds with international trends. In New Zealand, the provision of local content was seen as the appropriate use of the public broadcasting fee because it was more expensive to produce than the imported alternatives and therefore less commercially viable. In a reflection of this new understanding, the commission renamed itself New Zealand on Air (NZOA). Maori broadcasting received an unprecedented priority. In the principal clause stating its duties, the commission was required not only to cater for New Zealand interests but also to provide for Maori language and Maori culture. It was also to ensure a range of programmes provided for the interests of women, children, persons with disabilities and minorities. A further duty was to encourage the establishment of programme archives.

In a notable omission, there was no requirement for any total of New Zealand programming. Various groups, among them the Independent Producers' and Directors' Guild, Actors' Equity and Media Women, argued in their submissions for a local content quota. The government took no notice. Mary Varnham of Media Women argued that the real debate during the passage of the new broadcasting legislation was about local content but that she and all on her side lost.

The Radiocommunications Act was equally innovative and much in keeping with the government's commercial orientation and faith in the market. Announced by David Butcher, the minister of commerce, it introduced what he called a new system of radio spectrum management. Although it was the last of the broadcasting restructuring acts, its general nature had been known since Labour's December 1987 decision to deregulate the telecommunications sector. Originally frequencies were regarded as scarce resources which, in the national interest, needed to be controlled by the government. During the 1980s the introduction of FM in radio, the allocation of the UHF band to television and a variety of innovations in commu-



Tom Scott gives the common view in his response to the Maori challenge to the government's claim to ownership of radio frequencies.

nication technology generally, greatly increased the possible number of radio and television stations that could transmit simultaneously. The possible number of simultaneous broadcasters was so increased that the concept of frequencies as scarce resources became untenable and the government's attitude had to alter. But the change was extreme and the act introduced a system untried anywhere in the world: frequencies were to be regarded as commercial assets that could be sold or leased to the highest bidder. The act established a system of legal property rights for radio frequencies, referred to as individual spectrum products, and allowed them to be traded. The existing warrant system was abolished, though the current holders were given rights to their existing frequencies. The act was highly technical and largely escaped public discussion, but for one challenge, albeit unsuccessful, to the government from Maori claiming ownership of the radio frequency spectrum under the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi. As the *Dominion* noted, the claim became 'a topic of humour and derision' but the claimants were perhaps doing everyone a service.⁴² The concept of full property rights over the spectrum had not been considered until the government saw it as a source of revenue and claimed ownership for itself. Certainly the Maori claimants brought to greater attention their dissatisfaction with the government's broadcasting changes. In spite of the new legislative emphasis on Maori interests, Maori groups, in particular the Maori Council, continued to press for a separate Maori broadcasting service.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

In practice, the policy's introduction varied for television and radio. Non-commercial stations and networks, as opposed to publicly funded specific programmes, had no place in the new understanding yet National Radio and the Concert Programme, in particular, both existed and were well regarded by many, including parliamentarians. They also received substantial support, especially via the powerful and influential 5000-strong pressure group, Friends of the Concert Programme. It would be political folly to change that status quo. As a result, the minister directed the Broadcasting Commission to maintain RNZ's National Radio and Concert Programme networks 'in their present form', which meant advertising free and as distinct networks. In its first year the commission gave \$19.1 million to fund National Radio and \$5.7 million to the Concert Programme.⁴³ The direction to maintain the networks was in force 'at least until 1 July 1992'. The refusal to make the arrangement permanent indicated the government's dissatisfaction with the situation, clearly at odds with the act's intent to support programmes rather than stations and networks. Although the time was later extended, it meant continuing uncertainty for the RNZ non-commercial networks.

In television there were no non-commercial stations or networks. With the exception of some Sunday programming, the BCNZ and its predecessors had retained substantially the same style of commercial programming on all broadcasting days, commercial and non-commercial, for fear of alienating the majority audience. There had, however, been attempts to introduce non-commercial television: there were often suggestions that TV1 should become, if not non-commercial, at least less so and that it be the recognised public telecaster, with TV2 clearly commercial. The option became increasingly unlikely as the licence fee income shrank and became dedicated, as a first priority, to the NZSO and non-commercial radio. But it was never discarded. Monaghan had advised the board earlier in Labour's reign that the option could be followed only if Sunday, and therefore seven-day, advertising were allowed. That, he considered, would give a commercial TV2 sufficient income to compensate. But Sunday advertising was then against government policy. A non-commercial TV1 remained the BCNZ preference to the end. As the government was making its decisions on the future of broadcasting, Dick recommended that TV1 should be largely funded by licence fees and carry more local content and a wider range of social service programmes. This would leave TV2 as fully commercial and competing with the private TV3.

This aim for a non-commercial, or largely non-commercial, television channel foundered on the rock of the government's wider policy. Commercial radio and all television had long been publicly owned commercial enterprises and, in the new order, would be regarded as no differ-

ent from other SOEs — they, too, had to make a profit for the state. The objection that this would negate the licence fee paid by the public was regarded as irrelevant; that income was now handled by another body. Radio networks might be deemed exceptions but in television the financial stakes were higher.

The decision centred on the question of a dividend to be paid to the government, which was provided for in the 1976 act but had seldom been required by the minister. In its final year, as late as June 1988, the BCNZ board was told the minister agreed not to require a dividend in view of the forthcoming expenditure on the Commonwealth Games. This changed when broadcasting policy was finalised. The government wanted a substantial dividend and Rennie, in an agreement with the minister, conceded that this should be 40 per cent of annual profit. The annual surplus under discussion was \$3.9 million, so \$1.56 million would be paid to the minister as a dividend. To its dismay, the board then received a demand from the government for a dividend of \$15.5 million; in response, O'Regan defined the word 'dividend' as a euphemism for tax demand. The BCNZ went out of existence with the matter still unresolved. At the final meeting it was reported that four formal requests to the minister of finance to discuss the matter had all gone unanswered.⁴⁴ The size of dividend payments were a matter of continuing contest between future governments and SOE boards, but it was certain that television was and would remain a fully commercial enterprise.

TV3

New Zealand's third television channel began transmissions with a two-hour gala preview on Sunday 26 November 1989 and regular broadcasts started the following day. Its ownership and programming style bore little resemblance to that approved by the Broadcasting Tribunal in 1987. The broadcasting and commercial environments in New Zealand changed dramatically and TV3 changed with them. The stock market crash of October 1987 meant TV3 was unable to gain the backing on which it had planned and the government's broadcasting changes meant TV3 operated under conditions that did not apply when it won its warrant. In the new circumstances TV3 received investment backing not from numerous small shareholders but from larger corporations and, rather than building four regional transmitting stations, it opted for national transmission from Auckland.

The ownership structure of the organisation changed as rapidly as its broadcasting proposals. In the later months of 1988 Metro Media Ltd emerged as a significant shareholder and Trevor Egerton became the channel's chief executive. A former journalist and television producer both with the NZBC and ABC, Egerton was a principal in 91FM, one of the two

original commercial FM radio stations. The company owning that station became Metro Media and held shares in two of TV3's original regional companies. Egerton scored what seemed to be a coup when he announced that the major United States network, NBC, was taking a shareholding. This was a 4.9 per cent shareholding, the maximum allowed under the legislation, but was raised to 14.9 per cent, the maximum allowed under the 1989 Broadcasting Act, once that legislation came into effect. The original promoters of TV3 and winners of its warrant gradually left. Most had gone even before TV3 began broadcasting and by February 1990 only one remained.

TV3's opening months were difficult. Summer is the worst time of year for television ratings and not a good time to begin a new channel. TV3 competed with TVNZ, comparatively well resourced and exuberantly ready for competition. TVNZ not only had the loyalty of its long-established audience but its screening of the Commonwealth Games in January 1990 gave it a decided attraction for viewers. In the circumstances, TV3 did reasonably well and gained an audience share in the region of 15 per cent, though its main news bulletin did less well, rarely gaining a 10 per cent audience share. These statistics compared with those for new channels overseas opening against established competition. TV3 was its own worst enemy, however; it had made public much higher ratings expectations, including the assumption that it would begin with around a 30 per cent share of the audience. The result was a decline in the rates it could charge its advertisers, a fall in advertising sales and a loss of the confidence of its investors. On 2 May 1990 Westpac, the main debenture holder, placed the company into receivership, at which point NBC withdrew and the share price, which had listed at \$2.50, dropped to 10 cents.

TV3 continued broadcasting, the receiver deciding the best course was for the company to attempt to trade itself out of its financial troubles. Its audience size remained static. In 1993, after the channel had been broadcasting for almost four years, the Ministry of Commerce noted it had not achieved any significant increase in its audience share.⁴⁵ The saviour for TV3 was a further change in broadcasting legislation allowing for full foreign ownership. Searching for a new investor, the TV3 management lobbied the government, a National administration again after the 1990 election, for an increase in the allowable level of foreign ownership. The plea was supported by Treasury which saw no reason for broadcasting to be treated differently from any other business. The new government agreed and, because of TV3's position, accepted the need for urgency. In an internationally unique action, it passed the Broadcasting Amendment Act of 1991, which removed all restrictions on overseas persons or companies, allowing them to purchase up to 100 per cent of the shareholding of New Zealand broadcasting businesses. CanWest Global Communications Corporation, Canada's largest independent broadcaster, bought a 20 per

cent shareholding in TV3, with the right to increase that to 50 per cent. It also had a management contract over the business and, from the end of 1991, was in control of the channel. In 1997 CanWest increased its shareholding to full ownership.

TVNZ LTD

When TV3 was given its warrant the station's promoters considered TVNZ to be a conservative monolith unpopular with the television audience and unable to change. They were optimistic about their chances in the impending competition. Their appraisal was faulty from the start and became more so as TVNZ was readied both for the deregulated environment and the impending competition. Brian Corban, the inaugural chairman, saw his television SOE as having been given 'a fighting chance' in a competitive environment. It had considerably more than that. Broadcasting nationally over two established channels, it began the new era in a position of considerable dominance. The international trend was for new channels to struggle against established competition and that pattern was repeated in New Zealand.

High among TVNZ's assets was its chief executive, Julian Mounter, a man who, as Rennie said, 'could only be described as relentless'. Mounter, more than anyone else in TVNZ, accepted and relished the competitive environment and was fiercely determined that both TVNZ's channels would best TV3 in the audience ratings. The competition began long before the third channel went to air. With the abandoning of the plea for a non-commercial TV1, both TVNZ's channels were readied for new commercial identities in response to the legislation. The previous policy of keeping the two channels similar so as to split the audience equally between them was changed and they were aimed at distinct audiences defined by age. In the words of one commentator, 'Channel Two has a youth-oriented schedule full of American light entertainment and TV One, which is aimed at the 35+ audience, has mainly British programming and a number of news and current affairs programmes.'⁴⁶

In the new order there was competitive bidding for programmes which led to a rapid escalation in the prices paid. Nigel Dick had expected prices to increase by 20 to 30 per cent, but in mid-1988 he reported to the BCNZ board that TV3 was offering up to \$7,000 per hour for programmes as opposed to the established average price of around \$3,000. Dick, who regarded the TV3 approach as 'very naive', said the new competitor was meeting the higher prices by paying a 10 per cent deposit and making promises. TV3's Tom Parkinson was unrepentant and felt that 'low priced programmes had been subsidising the inefficiencies in TVNZ for the past 25 years'. This marked the end of an arrangement that had prevailed since Gilbert Stringer first gained low prices for overseas pro-

grammes in the early 1960s. Parkinson also argued that the higher prices would encourage the making of more local programmes as the differential between the two types lessened.⁴⁷ TV3 had some successes and, among others, TVNZ lost the American Disney organisation as one of its suppliers.⁴⁸ But TVNZ was far more successful in the new competition for programmes. It had considerable advantages. Not only did it have years of experience in programme purchase, in which it had built up relationships with most suppliers, but it also had much superior asset backing and cash flow. It acted quickly and astutely while TV3's attention was principally on its own survival and gained most of the long-term contracts with American and British programme suppliers. In New Zealand it signed contracts with the rugby, rugby league, netball and cricket authorities, thus taking for itself programme coverage of the country's four most followed sports.

The distinction between TVNZ's two channels and the primary commercial orientation for both was made clear in the changes to news programming. News bulletins continued on TV2 but only minimally because they were not popular with the young audience. On TV1 the nightly news programme dominated the evening schedule but in a new guise. Mounter had made clear that it would be a key element in the competition with TV3,⁴⁹ so the format was changed and the news presentation became the channel's flagship programme, designed to give authority to the channel and to attract viewers for the evening. The biggest manifestation of this change was the change of time to 6pm, a decision made commercially rather than in response to viewers' preferences. TV3 copied the time slot; neither was ready to concede the crucial period that marked the earliest possible opening to the evening's viewing. Both channels promoted their news programmes strongly, giving special emphasis to the newsreaders who, in a full turnaround from the anonymity of earlier years, were presented as lively personalities but still imbued with authority and taste. They were painted as having a personal relationship with the audience and, somehow, an individual responsibility for the bulletins. In accord with their new status and power, their salaries were raised extraordinarily.

Many of the changes in TVNZ were to do with purposes other than broadcasting. Although aiming to better TV3, TVNZ still expected to lose some of its audience share and so acted to compensate for any loss of revenue. Its tactic was a policy of cost cutting combined with business diversification. The money saving was most noticeable in the decline of staff numbers. Changes such as the closing of the drama department in favour of South Pacific Pictures started waves of redundancies in TVNZ. By the end of 1990, full-time TVNZ staff numbered around 1200, 800 less than three years before.

Diversification was intended both to compensate for any loss of revenue and to take advantage of the newly deregulated environment. Mounter, backed by the BCNZ board, and then the TVNZ board after the corpora-

tion was dismantled, led a series of changes by which TVNZ became an electronics communication business; a substantial amount of the company's activities were outside what appeared on the nation's television screens.⁵⁰ Much of this new orientation centred on Broadcast Communications Limited (BCL), the transmission and engineering facilities of the BCNZ which were separated into a distinct company, wholly owned by TVNZ. As before, BCL was responsible for the transmission of the TVNZ signals but now, after the passing of the Radiocommunications Act, it was also free and encouraged to seek other business. Along with the TVNZ signals, it handled transmissions for Sky Television, TVNZ's associate, for various radio stations and even, in 1990, for TV3. It also diversified into new areas, gaining contracts to manage telecommunications for such organisations as the New Zealand Police and Clear Communications Limited, a telephone company begun in the 1990s in competition with Telecom, the privately owned descendant of the P&T Department. Clear was itself a further instance of diversification: TVNZ had a 25 per cent shareholding in that enterprise. By 1992 just on 40 per cent of TVNZ's income came from other than television advertising. By 1996 it was over 50 per cent.

BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY

The Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA) is, along with the Broadcasting Commission, one of the two new bodies created by the Broadcasting Act. It is a four-member group; the chairperson must be a barrister and solicitor of no less than seven years standing and it must have one member representing the broadcasting industry and one representing the public. Iain Gallaway, appointed the inaugural chairman, was followed by Judith Potter; Sam Maling is the current chairman.

As with the earlier tribunal, complaints must first be made to the broadcaster concerned; only if the complainant is dissatisfied with the broadcaster's response is the matter referred to the BSA. If it upholds a complaint, the authority has the power to inflict various punishments. The strongest is to require a broadcaster to cease advertising for a specified period. So far this has been done only once, when, on Sunday 3 February 1991, TV1 had no advertising between 6pm and midnight and therefore suffered a significant loss of income. On 14 December 1990 the authority had upheld complaints about an episode of the TV1 current affairs programme, *Frontline*, which alleged various links between big business and the Labour government. Along with the complaint to the authority the programme sparked various defamation proceedings, some of which still remain before the court.

The authority can and does require broadcasters to record their programmes because this is important when it comes to considering com-

plaints. This presents no difficulty to the television networks and the larger radio stations, all of which had routinely begun to record programmes long before the authority came into being, but is difficult for the many small radio stations that have begun during the 1990s; for them, recording everything broadcast is a significant financial burden.

A 1996 amendment to the act gave the authority the power to claim costs up to \$5,000 from broadcasters. This power has been used often. In the context of broadcasting finances, this maximum is a nominal amount and is made even more so by seldom being fully applied. The BSA and broadcasters regard the claiming of costs as effectively a fine. It is used particularly in cases where privacy is breached.

Originally the authority covered all broadcasting but a 1993 amendment removed advertising from its domain and, instead, an Advertising Standards Authority was instituted, with an Advertising Standards Complaints Board.

In the original act, the authority was funded by an appropriation from Parliament, as part of the vote for the Ministry of Commerce. This gave the BSA an unstable and declining income since it suffered decreases not just from the effects of inflation but absolutely as cuts were made both to the vote for the Ministry of Commerce and to the share of that vote given to the authority. The major consequence has been a lack of attention to conducting research. The funding for the authority has changed since a 1996 amendment to the act. Now added to the funds appropriated from Parliament is an annual levy exacted on broadcasters. Currently this levy is the result of an $a \times b$ formula in which a is a broadcaster's annual operating income and b is 0.00051. The current authority annual income is approximately \$930,000: \$550,000 from the parliamentary appropriation and \$380,000 from the levy.

The authority has less power in its other functions. It issues advisory opinions about broadcasting standards and ethical conduct. It is also required to encourage codes of practice for such matters as the protection of children, the portrayal of violence and the promotion of fair and accurate news and current affairs programmes. The minister can require the authority to consider a matter but, at the time of writing, has never done so.⁵¹

RADIO IN THE 1990s

The most spectacular outcome of the new broadcasting policy can be seen in radio, where deregulation has resulted in a huge increase in the number of stations. At the beginning of July 1988, before the new policy took effect, there were 64 stations, 47 AM and 17 FM, broadcasting separate programmes on a continuous basis. As at 25 September 1993 the total had increased to 170 stations, 48 AM, 108 FM and 14 on both AM and FM

frequencies. And the increase was largely in privately owned stations: 30 private stations, or 47 per cent of the total, were broadcasting in 1988; by 1993 there were 126, or 74 per cent of the total.⁵² The number of stations continues to grow and in 1999, at the time of writing, radio broadcasts can be heard from 404 separate frequencies over the length of the country. That increase is highly unusual; New Zealand in the 1990s is often regarded as the world's most competitive radio market. As an illustration, one writer pointed out in 1996 that Auckland had one radio station per 68,000 people while Sydney, Australia's largest city, had one per 388,000 people.⁵³

The largest component in radio's growth has been commercial, in spite of commercial broadcasters' concerns about the new environment, particularly the advent of TV3. Before the new channel opened IBA chairman Doug Gold pointed out that, in New Zealand, 13 per cent of all advertising expenditure went to radio, a percentage he called the highest in the world; Australia had only 9 per cent. This he saw as due to the advertisers' unfulfilled demand for television time. With TV3 on screen, Gold feared a drop in radio advertising.⁵⁴ But commercial radio has not only weathered the increase in competition for advertising from a new channel but has reached new heights. The New Zealand radio audience has always had a substantial majority preference for commercial stations and the legislative changes allowed entrepreneurial broadcasters to cater to that preference in whatever way and to whatever extent they were prepared to risk. One of the first to take advantage of the new circumstances was the Christian broadcaster, Radio Rhema. Now permitted to advertise and able to make its own decisions regarding expansion, Radio Rhema has added considerably to its number of stations. As of 1999, its programmes are broadcast over an astonishing 30 separate frequencies from Kaitia to Invercargill.

Under the new legislation, the pattern of general corporate ownership of commercial radio stations has continued with renewed vigour. The changed rules have meant single concerns owning many stations and also the networking of commercial stations. Because radio stations are now owned by other media organisations, particularly newspaper concerns, there has been co-operation and synergy across various media. And ownership patterns are not static, with frequent and rapid changing jockeying for advantage.

An excellent example of the nature of change is Radio Pacific. No longer tied to the style of broadcasting decreed by the Broadcasting Tribunal, the station rapidly shed its pre-deregulation format and expanded: 26 per cent of its shareholding was purchased by the Totalisator Agency Board (TAB). That meant a new format, concentrating on talkback and racing commentaries, and, by the end of 1993, Radio Pacific was heard over 25 AM and FM frequencies, giving a 95 per cent nationwide coverage. In 1997 the company began a series of purchases of stations and

frequencies, from community stations to chains broadcasting under titles such as Solid Gold and The Edge. As of 1999 there are 80 frequencies in the Radio Pacific stable. Only a minority broadcast talkback and racing commentaries under the Radio Pacific title; the rest retain their original titles and broadcast round-the-clock music. The group is now the second-largest radio company in the country.

Radio Pacific is unusual in that it is the only major commercial broadcaster to remain in New Zealand ownership. The general pattern has been for ownership to leave New Zealand: a 1996 estimate indicated an 83 per cent foreign ownership of New Zealand radio stations.⁵⁵

COMMERCIAL RNZ

The dominance of private broadcasters, the growth of foreign ownership and ownership across various media are well illustrated by the fate of RNZ's commercial stations. All RNZ stations, commercial and non-commercial, became part of the new SOE, but their relationship was distant. RNZ Limited was formed as five trading divisions plus a small corporate group. As Wakem noted, 'The critical factor was a clear separation and accountability of Special Interest Broadcast Services [i.e. the non-commercial stations] largely funded by the public broadcasting fee as against advertiser-funded services.'⁵⁶

The commercial division began and continued in a strong position. It had established stations and continuing access to programming. It was a client of its own SOE's news division, which was also able to take outside clients. Its engineering, transmission, technical and information system requirements were met by the services division, also able to take outside clients. The final trading division, the national sales division, selling radio advertising time, served the commercial division along with further outside clients.

In spite of its strengths, the commercial division of RNZ had a weakness which, within a decade, proved fatal. This was the sheer incongruity of its continuation in the new environment. The minister of broadcasting said 'broadcasting is a business like any other. There is no difference between making programmes and making cheese. . . . Why should the state be involved?'⁵⁷ This was a highly contentious understanding of non-commercial broadcasting, but it was relatively undisputed with regard to commercial radio. The seemingly inevitable result was the sale of the stations. In 1996 the 43 RNZ commercial stations, as the Radio Network, were purchased as a package by a consortium. Its shareholding was dominated by the Irish media magnate, Tony O'Reilly, who had a controlling interest in Wilson & Horton, proprietors of the *New Zealand Herald* and the various other publications that comprised the country's second largest chain of newspapers and magazines.

The sale represented the last gasp of publicly owned commercial radio. Highly unusual internationally, the New Zealand system was formed in the political needs and circumstances of the first Labour government. Until the rise of television, it was the most popular form of broadcasting and held the majority radio audience almost continuously to the 1990s. Much of its programming transcended its political origins and for generations the stations functioned as entertainers, informers and companions. Their hallmark was their connection with and role in their local communities. That facet was gradually removed as commercial practices were emphasised in response to the re-emergence of private radio and to the inexorably declining licence fee income. That emphasis, coupled with the increasing conviction that the stations should be fully dissociated from the public broadcasting fee, supported the belief the state should not be involved at all. Made in response to criticism, the change eventually justified the criticism. The publicly owned commercial stations of RNZ were eventually sold to the private sector where they now really belonged.

PUBLIC RADIO

Just what constitutes public radio is not clear-cut in the 1990s. New Zealand On Air radio funding is not restricted to the publicly owned non-commercial stations of RNZ. NZOA material, such as its recordings of New Zealand popular music, is available to all stations, public and private, commercial and non-commercial. The organisation is also ready to fund private, commercial stations directly. In 1991, after surveying the preferences of Murchison radio listeners, NZOA contracted with the privately owned Radio Fifeshire rather than RNZ to extend radio coverage to the Murchison area. In the sense that some of its funding comes from the public broadcasting fee, via NZOA, it is possible to consider all New Zealand radio broadcasting public, but that title should really be restricted to the broadcasts from those stations that are non-commercial and publicly owned. These are all the stations controlled by the SOE that is RNZ, particularly those that are part of the two networks of National Radio and Concert FM.

For the RNZ stations there have been significant achievements in the 1990s. The major one has been with the Concert Programme which became Concert FM when it gained FM transmission. More than a new transmission technology was involved. Broadcasts were extended to 18 hours a day when FM began and the extraneous spoken programmes were taken off the network. Sports programming, in particular rugby and cricket commentaries, and parliamentary broadcasts had long taken up so much time on the Concert Programme that it often seemed to be a sports network or parliamentary broadcaster rather than a classical music programme. It was possible to argue, as Helen Young, the Concert FM manager, forcefully did, that FM should not be wasted on the spoken word.

Moreover there was now spare AM capacity that could become a new home for such programming. As a consequence Concert FM has achieved a full flowering. It became available well beyond the traditional four main centres. In 1999 it transmits from 30 separate frequencies throughout the country; the South Island's West Coast the only substantial area not to receive transmissions. It now transmits continuously, and is fully devoted to the classical music tradition.

A further winner from the broadcasting changes was what was dubbed Radio New Zealand International, the name given to the shortwave station broadcasting New Zealand programmes internationally. Its success followed from the political decision finally to replace and resite the aged Titahi Bay transmitters. The new system is essentially what was suggested by Whitehead in 1978. RNZ International now broadcasts via a 100kW transmitter in the central North Island. Although it is part of RNZ, its funding is distinct and is provided by a grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Generally, however, the 1990s have not been kind to public radio. In many ways its major achievement is its continuing existence, which has been won through a combination of pressure group activity and RNZ's own lobbying. The presence of RNZ, with its two national non-commercial networks fully funded by public money via NZOA, was contentious while the National government held power. With the 1999 change to a Labour government funding has been announced as secure, but the long-term future of the networks remains a matter of public and political debate.

Among RNZ's difficulties is the decreasing NZOA funding, of which RNZ takes a share. The ending of the BCNZ and start of the new system was accompanied by an increase in the public broadcasting fee to \$110 per year. In the following nine years the Consumers Price Index rose by 22 per cent while the fee remained static. As with earlier fees, the effective amount declined inexorably against the ravages of inflation. Coupled with that is a political reluctance to continue RNZ's level of funding. As of 1998, RNZ received \$19.4 million annually from NZOA, down more than \$5 million from its 1989-90 allocation. In defiance of the logic of the new legislation, RNZ got the government to agree that National Radio and Concert FM should be funded as networks, and with the 1999 change of government there is an acceptance that arrangement will continue. But public radio's capabilities, let alone its further development, remain uncertain. The declining funding has been met by a closing of various services. In 1997 *Rural Report* was stopped, the nightly children's programme, *Ears*, was replaced by a weekly programme and the Correspondence School broadcasts were moved from National Radio to Access Radio. A 1998 review of National Radio showed that, among others, the Pacific Island unit, regional production, church services and two-thirds of radio drama had been discarded.⁵⁸ The most public statement of the prevailing political dis-

dain for public radio was the 1997 destruction of Broadcasting House, done ostensibly to allow for the enlargement of Parliament Buildings. That plan was soon abandoned and the ground where Broadcasting House stood is now bare. Much of the activity of public radio has been moved to Auckland and, in Wellington, is conducted in an inferior building not designed specifically for broadcasting.

Public radio also faces continuing difficulties over its news service, which have become pronounced since the sale of the RNZ commercial stations. News, one of the five original trading divisions of RNZ, supplied all RNZ stations along with TVNZ, Teletext and a growing list of further clients. But the sale of the commercial stations has removed a significant part of the news division's guaranteed customer base and spells uncertainty for what is now New Zealand's only news service required to represent the broad public interest.

MAORI BROADCASTING

Among the non-publicly owned radio stations that receive funding from the public broadcasting fee are those specifically oriented to Maori. Maori scepticism about radio and television representation continued into the new era. The government's plan to auction frequencies was delayed by Maori applications to the Waitangi Tribunal and the High Court. The result was designated radio frequencies in all centres of significant Maori population for the promotion of Maori language and culture. AM frequencies were reserved for the use of the proposed national Maori broadcaster, Radio Aotearoa. In all other cases FM frequencies were reserved. For these, the Ministry of Commerce was required to encourage iwi organisations to become broadcasters. NZOA was directed by the minister to apply 6 per cent of its public broadcasting fee revenue to Maori broadcasting; \$1.44 million, from the total percentage, would be committed to Radio Aotearoa. In all cases, the Maori stations were permitted to broadcast advertising and operate commercially, but within the confines of their primary orientation to broadcast to a Maori audience with the intention of promoting the Maori language and culture.

NZOA was the first national organisation directed to support Maori broadcasting and with funding to do so. The results were soon apparent. Radio Aotearoa began broadcasting in Auckland in August 1988 in the last weeks of the BCNZ and under NZOA it was joined by four new iwi-based stations, Radio Ngati Porou, Radio Tautoko, Te Reo Irirangi o Tainui and Radio Te Arawa. NZOA also continued the support previously given by the BCNZ to Wellington's Te Upoko o Te Ika. The other substantial beneficiary of commission funding was Mana Maori Media News Service, founded by Derek Fox, and designed to provide Maori news and current affairs information to both Maori radio stations and National Radio.

Although the 6 per cent of the fee revenue had been allocated to Maori broadcasting, NZOA decided to apply that amount entirely to Maori radio. Television received a further allocation under the terms of the legislation, namely to fund specific programmes.

Maori still wanted a distinct broadcasting organisation and in 1993 the government agreed, after further and lengthy court action. Maori authorities opposed the transfer of assets from RNZ and TVNZ to their new SOEs on the grounds that there were no specific provisions to promote the Maori language and culture. Although Maori lost the battle — both the Court of Appeal and the Privy Council accepted the transfer — their cause was much advanced with legal authorities suggesting that the government and Maori negotiate to determine how broadcasting could assist the protection and promotion of the Maori culture, particularly its language. As a result, Te Reo Whakapuaki Irirangi, a Maori broadcasting funding agency, was formed in 1993, holding its first meeting in September. Te Reo Whakapuaki Irirangi was to have been responsible for \$13 million of funding, a \$1 million increase on the amount reached by NZOA's annual expenditure on Maori broadcasting. By the start of 1995, when the new agency began its responsibilities, its name had been changed to Te Mangai Paho and the minister had directed that its funding be 13.4 per cent of the fee income. Up to then, NZOA funding had allowed Radio Aotearoa to increase its transmissions to include Wellington and Christchurch as well as Auckland and there were 20 iwi-based stations on the air.⁵⁹ The amount NZOA now had to hand to Te Mangai Paho was the percentage of its funding it had been giving to Maori broadcasting and also approximately equated with the proportion of Maori in the total New Zealand population. It was effectively a considerably disproportionate subsidy: Maori greatly supported their new stations, but they also continued to listen to other stations. In a survey of Maori listeners in those areas that did receive a Maori station NZOA found the Maori stations had a 40 per cent share of the time spent listening to radio.⁶⁰ It was accepted politically, however, that such support was necessary to right past imbalances and ensure the continuing existence of Maori radio.

Maori broadcasting in the 1990s has not been subject to the government's overarching requirement that stations be commercially reliant. In spite of the amount of Te Mangai Paho funding, however, there has been continuing criticism that it is hopelessly inadequate. The difficulty is most obvious with regard to television where the spectacular changes in radio have not been matched. The objectives for Maori television have been twofold, both to promote Maori programming on the existing channels and to introduce a separate Maori channel. The former objective has been met with only limited success; the latter is the most notable failure in the current policy for Maori broadcasting. Maori content has been promoted within general television programming and specifically Maori programmes

have also been commissioned — Te Mangai Paho funds, for example, the programmes *Te Karere* and *Marae* — but such programmes total little more than was present on screen during the BCNZ era. The television channels, oriented overwhelmingly to a majority audience, are reluctant to screen minority appeal material, within which they include Maori material. On the other hand, Te Mangai Paho has a statutory obligation to promote Maori material even if the channels are unenthusiastic about accepting it. As a consequence, funding agencies have been required to pay a higher proportion of the costs of Maori programming material than for any other type of television content.⁶¹

The situation is more dismal for a separate Maori channel. Television is considerably more expensive than radio and the risks have proved too great. There has been an attempt to start Maori television. Aotearoa Television began transmissions in 1996 but ceased them in 1997 in a national and political *cause célèbre* ripe with allegations of incompetence and financial mismanagement. Of at least equal significance were the many administrative problems resulting from the Te Mangai Paho requirement for haste, allowing less than two months for the establishment of the station. Te Mangai Paho is answerable to the minister of broadcasting and the speedy, costly and ultimately unsuccessful founding of Aotearoa Television was due as much to the government's wish to be seen as making progress in Maori television as to any inadequacies in the personnel involved in running the station. As at the time of writing the existence of a distinct Maori television channel remains unfulfilled.

Maori interest groups are increasingly dissatisfied with the scant coverage of Maori issues on television. The inability to programme a significant total of such material on the existing channels led to the desire for a separate dedicated channel. The continuing failure to provide a channel for the substantial and well-organised minority that is New Zealand's Maori population indicates the current domination of commercially driven mainstream channels catering for a majority audience.

Funding difficulties are also apparent in Maori radio. As well as providing funding for television programmes, Te Mangai Paho supports iwi radio stations — 21 in 1999, two news and current affairs services, Mana News and Ruia Mai, and Starnet, a network service that provides a link among the iwi stations. The sheer number of stations that have begun broadcasting in the 1990s means the available funding is spread thinly. Because Maori broadcasting is in its infancy, training for broadcasters is much needed, but there is not enough funding to pay for this, and Maori broadcasters have had to continue their substantially voluntary work. As a consequence there have been casualties. The largest was in 1998 when Radio Aotearoa ceased broadcasting. The station had ceased broadcasting outside Auckland and when its Te Mangai Paho funding was reduced substantially its controllers were unable to continue and closed the station.

Funding inadequacies, however, are not the sole or even the major problem facing Maori radio. Maori broadcasters and Te Mangai Paho are confronted with a dilemma regarding the purpose of Maori broadcasting and its relationship to the Maori language. A major matter of contention, and one which hurt Radio Aotearoa, is that funding is contingent on a dominant use of Maori rather than English so that *te reo* would not fall into disuse. Indeed the government's, and therefore also its funding agency's, dominant purpose in supporting Maori broadcasting is to fulfil responsibilities stemming from the Treaty of Waitangi to promote Maori language and culture. In the current circumstances, however, broadcasting in Maori means speaking in a tongue in which the majority of listeners are not fluent. NZOA's 1994 survey indicated that a large majority of Maori listeners wanted an equal use of English and Maori languages. So Maori broadcasters, though equally eager to promote Maori, wish to take a more gradual approach and retain their audience, but are pressured to broadcast more fully in Maori in order to retain their funding. They consider themselves forced to choose between Te Mangai Paho funding and commercial viability. Mai FM chose commercial viability, opting out of both Te Mangai Paho's language requirements and funding. But it is not entirely severed from Te Mangai Paho since its news and current affairs service, Ruia Mai, was started in 1996 with funding from Te Mangai Paho. This led to further conflict when the various iwi station managers unanimously rejected a Te Mangai Paho decision that they play the Ruia Mai Maori language news and current affairs programme daily between 6.30 and 9.30am. This is the prime commercial time for radio and the managers feared losing both their audience and advertisers. In a compromise, the stations were allowed to broadcast the programme later in the day. This decision meant the programme went to a considerably smaller audience, diluting the Te Mangai Paho goal of achieving maximum exposure of the Maori language.

Not only most of the listeners but often the broadcasters themselves are not fluent in Maori. An early survey of the stations' Maori language content by the Maori Language Commission indicated in many cases both a low quality and quantity of Maori language content. Maori Language Commissioner Timoti Karetu, in a drive to raise the quality of the Maori language broadcast, called for one national Maori radio station employing top Maori talent to replace the numerous existing Maori stations.⁶² Although that would allow a concentration of Maori speaking talent and presumably raise the quality of broadcast Maori, it does run counter to the other policy aim for Maori stations, namely encouraging the growth of iwi stations. The issue remains a matter of contention as broadcasters strive to attract as large an audience as possible and the funding agency seeks to make broadcasts meet social objectives the government is legally required to promote.

TELEVISION IN THE 1990s

As in radio, there has been a considerable increase in the 1990s in the number of television channels transmitting. In radio the increase has brought a variety of ownership patterns, programming styles and content but on television variety has been harder to introduce and the decade is as significant for its failures as for its successes.

The decade began with the 1991 return of regional television, though only to Canterbury, when Canterbury TV, CTV, began transmissions in June. The new channel's existence owed much to its principals, sister and brother Joanna and Paul McMenamin, along with Larry Podmore, an ex-TVNZ producer, and to Canterbury's record of being the most supportive region of local television in the country. The station was indebted to TVNZ, leased that broadcaster's Christchurch facilities and broadcast free-to-air for 24 hours a day. With much coverage of local issues, it was well supported in Canterbury and rapidly became a substantial organisation, employing over 100 people in 1992, a large number for a regional station. In 1994 CTV was joined by Nelson-based Mainland TV, beginning largely as a music channel. Another Nelson channel, Bays Television, opened in 1994 with significant shareholding held by CTV. In 1996 Eastland Television of Gisborne opened. Although CTV was easily the largest of the new ventures, the future of regional television seemed secure.

But appearances were deceiving and circumstances changed in 1995 when four more regional stations opened. These were ATV of Auckland, Coast to Coast broadcasting from Hamilton, Capital City of Wellington and Southern from Dunedin. The four were part of Horizon Pacific, a wholly owned subsidiary of TVNZ, with Trevor Egerton as chief executive. Rather than securing the government's plan to introduce locally owned regional television, the founding of Horizon Pacific indicated the problems experienced implementing that policy. With few exceptions, the UHF frequencies reserved for regional television attracted little interest from private investors. Instead TVNZ, via its BCL subsidiary, purchased the frequencies for the major centres, other than Christchurch, and consolidated its dominance. Horizon Pacific's arrival was not good news for CTV which, at the start of 1996, was absorbed by TVNZ and reintroduced as part of the Horizon Pacific grouping. With nightly local news bulletins and a concentration on BBC programming, Horizon Pacific was promoted as a combination of public and regional television broadcasting. But in spite of its TVNZ ownership, Horizon Pacific was neither given nor did it earn the capital backing to perform adequately as either a public or regional broadcaster. The five stations ran at a considerable financial loss and in June 1997 all were closed.

The closures have not meant the complete collapse of regional television. In the North Island small stations operate out of Hawke's Bay,

Gisborne and Rotorua. The situation is healthier for regional television in the South Island. Mainland TV continues and has expanded its programming considerably beyond music videos. Two regional stations broadcast in Canterbury: CTV, which is owned by the Family TV network, and CHTV, which is owned by local interests. Dunedin has Channel 9 which was redesigned in 1998 from a tourism to a full television channel. Its ownership includes the Family TV network and Allied Press, owners of the *Otago Daily Times*. Southland has Mercury TV, based in Invercargill, and owned by Southland Regional TV, a consortium of local business and farming interests. The last few years have seen the toehold on regional television increase to something more substantial and secure. It is too early to acknowledge a healthy life for regional television but it is possible that the 1990s have witnessed the birth of a second distinct style of television to place against the dominant national channels.

Music television, MTV, was a casualty of the turbulence of the decade. Channels devoted to music and music videos began in the United States in the 1980s and soon spread to other countries, revolutionising the marketing of popular music. In the 1990s they began transmission in New Zealand with Max Television of Auckland opening in 1993, and Mainland TV of Nelson and Cry Television of Christchurch in 1994. TVNZ introduced a fourth in 1997. At the time Horizon Pacific closed its five stations TV3 announced the introduction of its second channel, the youth-oriented TV4. In response, though it insisted the timing was coincidental, TVNZ closed down its Horizon Pacific stations and in their place introduced the MTV channel. This was followed in turn by the closure of Max Television and Cry Television, leaving only Mainland TV and TVNZ's MTV channel. However TVNZ closed its MTV channel in 1998.

So, for free-to-air television, six regional stations, three music channels and one Maori channel have all been started and closed in the 1990s. But there are successes to place alongside these failures. A TAB Trackside channel, devoted to horse racing, has been started and continues successfully. A new channel, Prime Television, a subsidiary of Australia's largest regional television broadcaster, began transmissions in August 1998. Concentrating on documentaries and on well-regarded drama from earlier years of television, such as *Bonanza* and *Here's Lucy* from the United States and Britain's *Rumpole of the Bailey* and *George and Mildred*, it is bidding to attract a mature audience. Prime Television also includes programming, particularly a regular marketplace programme, which emphasises Canterbury. It is attempting to appeal to Canterbury parochialism and, while transmitting nationwide, is also effectively a third regional station for Canterbury. TV4 has become well established. Like its stable-mate, TV3, and its opponents, the two channels of TVNZ, it broadcasts 24 hours a day. Along with these free-to-air channels there are the five pay television channels of Sky Television. Further, Sky Television is in the process of changing to a satel-

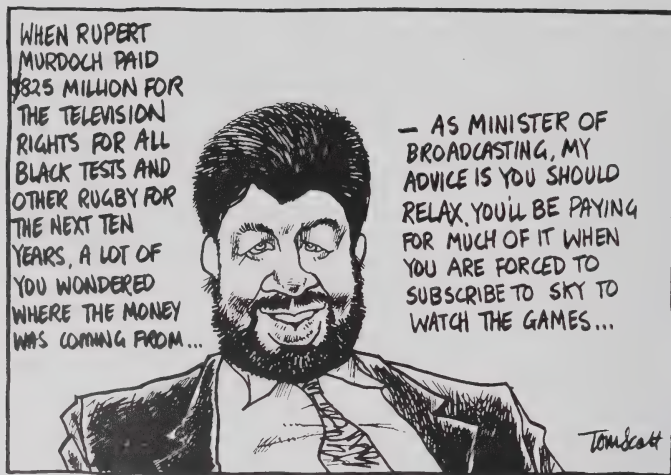
lite-transmitted, digitally based form of pay television that will at least triple the number of channels available.

And yet in spite of this quantity, there has been greater questioning of the quality of television programming and greater scrutiny of its nature than ever before.⁶³ For nearly all critics, the heart of the problem is seen to be the unrelenting commercial nature of New Zealand television. There has been a considerable increase in advertising content. Experienced documentary-maker David Baldock notes that an hour documentary used to mean, under the NZBC, 58 minutes for Sunday transmission or 52 minutes on Tuesday, a commercial day. Currently an hour-long documentary is less than 45 minutes in length, leaving the rest of the hour to be filled with commercials. The most tightly defined are 42.5 minutes long. Along with the time constriction, documentaries are also required to conform to a pattern of story narration governed by advertising breaks: they have to be fitted into a format of eight-minute parts.⁶⁴ The country's television success is now measured predominantly by commercial return and, in response, New Zealand television has introduced one of the world's highest advertising content regimes. And that content not only fills a greater portion of screen time but also influences the nature of other programming.

The commercial domination has meant a growing similarity between TVNZ and CanWest, particularly in their main 6pm to 7pm news bulletins. The two programmes are promoted in terms of their excellence and individuality, but it is possible, flicking from one to the other, to see the same news items treated in the same style and sequence. As a result, TVNZ has lost its ratings supremacy. In 1997, as Ruth Harley noted, for the first time TV3 cut in on TVNZ to become the second channel in the key income-generating 18- to 49-year-old market.⁶⁵ TV3 does not have as big an audience as TVNZ but it has grown towards equality in audience ratings over the decade as viewers have become familiar with the channel and as the two broadcasters have become more alike.

Politically, the commercial nature of television is regarded as an asset, as is shown by the government's policy regarding dividends from TVNZ. There has been consistent pressure for these to be as high as possible. During Corban's chairmanship, dividends were kept to 40 per cent of profits but they rose considerably during the terms of his successors, Norman Geary and Rosanne Meo, with dividends of 70 per cent normally required by the minister. This has meant an impressive contribution to the country's public accounts, but it has not allowed TVNZ to keep investing in and maintaining equipment for its two channels and it has been less able to make and purchase programmes.

The changes are part of a wider triumph of commercialism rather than the full responsibility of broadcasters. This is well shown by the changes in the televised coverage of sport, and particularly rugby, in the 1990s. The decade began with a greater concentration on rugby, rugby league, cricket



Tom Scott in the *Evening Post*.

and netball and a reduction of the already scant coverage of any other sporting activities. Then, in combination with pay television broadcasters, the two rugby codes embraced and led a movement towards a full professionalism in their top echelons. For rugby administrators, particularly, it was a full turnaround from their historical reluctance to accept involvement with broadcasting. Television broadcasting became the revenue source for a new style of sport and televised sport became a major part of pay television programming. The result has been not only a growing commercialism and professionalism in sport, along with a reshaping of rules to emphasise its entertainment value, but also a removal of live coverage of top sporting events from free-to-air television and their use on pay television as a considerable attraction to a growing list of subscribers. Although the ending of live coverage of rugby tests on free-to-air television was predictable and had been prefigured elsewhere,⁶⁶ it finally brought home to New Zealanders, as nothing else had done, the implications of the broadcasting changes.

The decade was also notable for a reluctance by the National government to retain ownership of TVNZ. A number of prominent politicians and other figures advocated the complete privatisation of the entire company. This was done in a piecemeal fashion through sales of parts of TVNZ with each separate sale decried by the government's political opponents as a loss of public property. The *Listener* was the first to go: in November

1990 Wilson & Horton, the long-time printers of the magazine, purchased a majority shareholding. National had long advocated the sale of the *Listener* so this was no surprise, but in the late 1990s there were further sales. In late 1997 TVNZ retained 20 per cent and sold the other 80 per cent of the Natural History Unit to Twentieth Century Fox, which is itself owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Media Corporation. In early 1998 South Pacific Pictures Ltd, TVNZ's production company subsidiary, was sold to an entertainment consortium made up of two New Zealand companies, Force Corporation and Endeavour Entertainment, along with the English company, Chrysalis Entertainment. In 1999 the TVNZ shareholdings in both Sky Television and Clear Communications were sold. Such sales made TVNZ a specialised television programmer and reversed the policy of the early 1990s which had developed the company into a diverse electronics communication business. They seemed to prefigure a complete sale of TVNZ by a government which both desired funds for other purposes and was reluctant to continue its involvement with a commercial concern operating in an environment of rapid change and uncertainty, and in need of considerable capital to update its technology. The 1999 Labour government, however, has announced that, at least during its term of office, TVNZ will remain in public ownership and will be reoriented back towards a more traditional style of public broadcasting.

NEW ZEALAND ON AIR

Although TVNZ is state-owned, and therefore publicly owned, there is now no sense in which either of its two channels can be described as a public broadcaster. That responsibility is the preserve of New Zealand on Air, the organisation which receives and disperses the entire income from the public broadcasting fee. NZOA's role, as described by one of its executives, is to act as a cultural intervention mechanism to free market broadcasting.⁶⁷ Broadcasters would accept that description. Fully commercial free market broadcasters are reluctant to programme not only minority material but also expensive New Zealand material. NZOA, with its mission to provide local content, is the mechanism to counter that reluctance. There has, however, been considerable dispute about how it performs the task.

When the government's plans for broadcasting were fully revealed, there was an initial grudging acceptance at TVNZ of the logic behind the creation of NZOA. Corban, for instance, felt that, though the plans were very different from those for which the BCNZ had argued, the battle was not entirely lost and public broadcasting had survived to fight another day. But Corban and his TVNZ colleagues soon became more pessimistic as the implications of the legislation became apparent. TVNZ expected NZOA to use the fee income assigned for television programmes to com-

mission what it had traditionally regarded as public service programming, in particular minority appeal programmes which, while worthy, had little hope of attracting a wide audience and therefore sufficient advertising to be a commercial success. The legislation, however, requires not only that NZOA fund programmes about New Zealand and New Zealand interests but also that it have regard to the size of the potential audience for its programmes. Merwyn Norrish, the inaugural head of NZOA, properly interpreted this as a duty to fund 'programmes that have a good chance of making it to prime broadcast hours'.⁶⁸ TVNZ, which estimated it was then spending \$140 million annually on local programming, found NZOA intended substantially to mirror TVNZ's commercially appropriate programming rather than supplement it by concentrating on a non-commercial alternative.

The major instance of NZOA's funding of commercial programming and one of its great successes is the soap opera *Shortland Street*, which NZOA saw as a cost-effective way to deliver New Zealand drama to a television audience. The start of *Shortland Street*, which screens on TV2, was the main reason NZOA's 1991-92 funding of prime-time television drama totalled 187 hours, up from the previous year's 77. Initially TVNZ did not favour involvement in the high costs of a daily drama and was persuaded only for fear that TV3 would take up the option. The resulting programme has been highly successful in New Zealand and has sold overseas. NZOA has ceased its funding to the programme which is well able to continue on the funds from the advertising sales it attracts.

But few NZOA programmes have continued to become financially self-sufficient. With the exception of the stalwarts of news and sports, most local programming relies on a contribution from NZOA. Also, because of NZOA's accentuation of mainstream programming, the television companies have tended to withdraw from fully funding such material. NZOA supports programmes which would previously have been financed entirely by television companies. *Country Calendar* is one example. It moved from full funding by TVNZ to a subsidy from NZOA, though the programme is now commercially sponsored.

This is not to suggest that NZOA support is entirely for mainstream, prime-time programmes. The legislation also requires NZOA to take heed of minority interests and it has spent considerably in those areas. Many programmes have been deliberately oriented towards minority audiences and NZOA also strives to ensure that minority issues are dealt with in programmes aimed predominantly at a majority audience. NZOA does not interfere in production but, before it agrees to fund a programme, it requires would-be producers to reflect the variety of New Zealand society by, for example, including in their dramas characters from minority groups. The practice has been criticised as an undue editorial input but it is clearly within the requirements of the legislation and does reflect a political deci-

sion rather than an idiosyncratic NZOA policy. NZOA is not merely a funding agency; it has considerable influence on the nature of particular programmes and on the changing style of programming. It decided, for instance, that 1993–94 was to be the year of comedy and deliberately sought to promote that genre. TV3 took up this option with considerable success.⁶⁹

NZOA is not, however, the dominant presence in television programming. In practice the real selection remains with the television broadcasting companies. A proposal is not acceptable to NZOA unless a company has agreed to broadcast it and a programme tends not to be acceptable unless the television company has shown the seriousness of its intent by agreeing to pay a percentage of the production costs. This percentage varies with the expectation that arts or Maori programmes, for example, will receive a greater percentage of their funding from NZOA than, say, comedy programmes and prime-time drama. The television companies are not willing to agree to broadcast and to contribute financially to a range of possibilities, leaving NZOA to choose which ones will go ahead. Instead they agree only to those they do want produced and screened and so rejections at the NZOA level have become fewer.

Whether NZOA has improved local content within New Zealand broadcasting is, in terms of the legislation, a quantitative rather than qualitative measure. In terms of percentages, there was little change in the 1990s. NZOA efforts in promoting local music both on radio and via music videos on television were considerable and were accepted in both media, but led to little percentage change over the decade. In 1999 New Zealand musicians and their supporters were attempting yet again to have a local content quota imposed on the country's radio stations. Exasperated by the seeming inability to increase that content via NZOA, they returned to advocating a quota, the method followed successfully in many countries but always denied politically in New Zealand. On television, too, there was little percentage change in local content. NZOA's 1997 local content survey of TV1, TV2 and TV3 indicated 23.9 per cent of local material in total television programming in 1988, the year before the new legislation came into effect. That figure was exceeded in the four following years but then fell below the 1988 percentage: in 1997 it was 21.3 per cent. But the figures disguise some real changes, especially the fact that transmission hours increased greatly so that maintaining a similar percentage of local content meant a similar increase. Total New Zealand content was 2112 hours in 1988 and 5601 hours in 1997. The growth was bigger in prime-time hours: 686 hours or 23.5 per cent of the total was New Zealand content in 1988, rising to 1636 hours or 37.5 per cent in 1997. There was also substantial growth in the key areas of drama and comedy: a mere 39 hours was scheduled in 1988, but this rose more than eight-fold to 336 hours in 1997.⁷⁰

Not all local content can be ascribed to NZOA; New Zealand programming is also made independently. Sports programming, news and current affairs, have also increased and these receive little NZOA funding. But the requirement that the income from the public broadcasting fee be spent substantially on providing local content has broadcasters, especially on television, programming many more hours of local content than they were prepared to do in the past when, as public broadcasters, they received the public broadcasting fee income directly, and many more than they would otherwise programme under a commercially oriented regime. One wonders, however, whether the same results could not have been obtained, and without use of the public broadcasting fee, simply by following the more conventional method, widely adopted in other countries, of imposing a local content quota on broadcasters.

The quality and the variety, as opposed to the quantity, of local content are more open to differing judgements. One of the tenets of public broadcasting, as presented by Britain's 1986 Peacock report, was that production be structured to encourage a competition for quality rather than for audience numbers. The current New Zealand system does not recognise such a distinction. It is a measure of the historical inadequacy of the amount of local content scheduled that public broadcasting is effectively now defined as local content *per se*. The current measures fail to offer any provisions regarding the assessment of the quality of local content. In essence, unlike the majority of art criticism, from literature to television programming, the assumption is the bigger the audience the better the programme. That has led to substantial criticism that NZOA's public broadcasting fee programming cannot be distinguished from the commercial programming it should better. It has also led to difficulties in allowing a variety of programming, which is best illustrated by the NZOA decision to neglect regional television in favour of the far larger national audience. The NZOA regime effectively subsidises the dominant national broadcasters and protects them against competition from weaker would-be rivals who wish to offer an alternative style.

In 1999 the funding regime for NZOA changed when the government announced the abolition of the public broadcasting fee from 2000, to be replaced by an annual grant from general taxation. During the 1990s a public broadcasting fee income was not a noticeably successful way to fund programmes. NZOA remained subject to the same difficulty that has bedevilled public broadcasting since 1975: the level of the public broadcasting fee was set politically and the political reluctance to increase it did not diminish. The \$110 fee was set in 1989 and has remained unchanged. Consequently NZOA's purchasing lessened over the decade. NZOA compensated by continuing the efforts of the BCNZ to increase the number of listeners actually paying the fee. By 1994 the compliance level had reached 90 per cent and, for the first time, more than one million households paid

the fee. There was a declining possibility of further income, which became a topic of public discussion in 1998 when NZOA was much criticised for spending more money than it was bringing in on finding and prosecuting non-fee payers. In her 1994 annual report, Ruth Harley, the inaugural chief executive of NZOA, drew attention to the implications of the static fee, particularly the lessening ability of her organisation to fulfil its functions, but her words were not heeded. Five years later the fee was unchanged and the situation had worsened. The consequences of the abolition of the fee remain to be seen. The political difficulties of increasing an unpopular compulsory fee are now gone and the grant can be as high as a government determines, but there was no initial indication of generosity. A parsimonious government quantified the change to an annual grant by opting only to continue the amount then received by NZOA, in other words, the total public broadcasting fee actually paid, less NZOA's cost of collection. There are no signs that the change from a fee to a grant income will reduce the financial difficulties faced by New Zealand's public broadcasters.

INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION HOUSES

Independent production houses have grown considerably in both their numbers and their output under the new regime, and have provided some viewing variety. Unwanted by the NZBC, struggling for existence under the BCNZ, these have become the main makers of New Zealand television programmes. Speaking of their new ability not only to survive but also to prosper, Dave Gibson notes, 'For independents New Zealand on Air is the turning point.' The development can be understood by tracking the change to IPDG, the Independent Producers' and Directors' Guild, which in the 1990s became SPADA, the Screen Producers' and Directors' Association. In the last years of the BCNZ, and more quickly since its ending, in-house production for TVNZ and TV3 has been severely curtailed and now involves mainly news, current affairs and sport, the continuing and regularly live productions for which it is still regarded as logistically necessary and economically sensible to maintain production staff and facilities. For all other programmes, independent production has become dominant. Even when other productions are made within the television broadcasting companies, they are the work of personnel on temporary contract. Whether made within or outside TVNZ or TV3, productions are similar in their staffing styles and payment levels. The change in title from IPDG to SPADA recognised the need for an organisation to represent people who would move in and out of contact employment from either independent production houses or television broadcasting companies.

NZOA may have been the driving force in giving a new lease of life to the independent production houses, but the advent of TV3 is also of con-

siderable significance. Its arrival has made the independent producers' existence less precarious. Not only has it introduced a second potential buyer of programmes but it has changed the relationship between network and producer: rather than being a monopoly purchaser, a network now has to consider, if it fails to come to an agreement with a programme-maker, whether that programme will be screened by its rival.

TO THE FUTURE

The 1990s broadcasting regime, from the commercial understanding of frequencies as tradeable 'spectrum products' to the NZOA-administered definition of public broadcasting as the funding of particular programmes deemed to be in the general interest, is a unique experiment still to run its course. Far more than with earlier broadcasting acts, the current legislation allows a situation to unfold rather than be fully formed on release. So far it has resulted in the considerable growth in the number of both radio and television stations and also in the increasing non-New Zealand ownership of those stations. It has allowed the triumph of commercial broadcasting, which had gathered in strength from the mid-1970s, and has exposed public broadcasting to the danger of extinction which for so long faced private broadcasting. Such changes were not only foreseen but even welcomed politically. The pendulum has swung as strongly in favour of unregulated commercial broadcasting as, in the 1950s, it was swung in the opposite direction. The changes, however, are contentious and remain topics of much debate and general concern. This history concludes in 1999 but there is no sense in which that date marks an endpoint in the saga of New Zealand broadcasting. Broadcasting is of too much public interest and too much social moment not to remain a topic of continuing debate and political contest.

BROADCASTING AND NEW ZEALAND

Since broadcasting began in the 1920s its nature has changed beyond the imaginings of those who witnessed its introduction. It is a century since Rutherford's Cambridge experiments with the half-mile transmission of radio waves, 70 years since Admiral Byrd's voice was the first to be heard simultaneously in New Zealand from Spirits Bay to Foveaux Strait and nearly 30 years since the initial reception in New Zealand of satellite-transmitted television pictures. When the recording and storage of sound programmes became possible in the 1930s these were sent to stations at the speed and availability of land, sea and air services. In the 1990s the advent and spread of communication satellites means global transmission of sound and pictures at the speed of light.

The years have been accompanied by far-reaching changes in the New Zealand practice of broadcasting. Radio in the 1920s and television in the 1960s began under a political direction that each medium become a single national voice. Now, in many ways, the broadcasting-New Zealand relationship is both too large and too small a unit of analysis. I am writing while listening to my home-town station, Raglan Community Radio, a low-powered FM station available only in Raglan and the immediately surrounding countryside. There are times when I listen to an uninterrupted hour or more of song and music. There are times when the station is alive with announcements and discussion of real interest to our townspeople and of little concern to anyone else. The station provides local broadcasting which, because of the regulatory regime, was quite unavailable until this decade though it is akin to the programming offered by some of the B stations before they were bought by the state in 1937. The concerns of the wider nation are not foreign to Raglan Community Radio but its broadcasting interests are those of our town.

There are many equivalent stations throughout the country and many stations that express a community of a different nature. The Radio Rhema group of stations is an example and its Christian orientation may be growing, as the current move into television broadcasting by the Lifeway Ministries Trust suggests, but the most notable are the various iwi stations, also unavailable until the past decade. I write at a time when the meaning of iwi is a matter of dispute to the point of litigation, but clearly the iwi

stations give expression to regional tribal identities. My local iwi station is *Tainui FM*, broadcasting from *Ngaruawahia*. More powerful than my *Raglan* station, its broadcasts are regional and oriented to the interests of *Tainui*, and to *Waikato*-based pleasures and concerns in general. The proliferation of stations in the 1990s has allowed the expansion of broadcasting interests. Particularly it has allowed a regional and local focus not possible when broadcasting was controlled in the interests of the nation.

Indeed the sheer increase in the number of stations has acted against the national unification that was a feature of early New Zealand radio and television. The situation of earlier decades, in which a substantial proportion of the population paid attention to a single broadcast, is still possible but happens only rarely. Instead the vast audience is split into a myriad of distinct groups listening separately to a disparate array of broadcasting signals. Discussions about broadcast programmes continue to permeate our conversations but no longer is there that society-wide familiarity with the same programme. A prime minister may continue to 'speak to the nation' but it can no longer be assumed that most people are listening.

Conversely, broadcasting has taken New Zealanders beyond their national boundaries. New Zealanders have always eagerly sought news from abroad and the recent communication developments have obliterated the significance of distance. Indeed such matters as the news and details of the night-time death of the Princess of Wales in 1997 spread more rapidly in New Zealand than in France and England where people were asleep and unreachable until the morning. The immediate availability of news from afar, be it momentous accounts of ongoing war in the Balkans or trivial reports of sporting contests, has changed New Zealanders' knowledge and interests; along with the inhabitants of other countries, they have moved into an international sphere.

A major part of this change has come from broadcasting's international programming: New Zealanders share many of their broadcasting experiences with people from many countries. The nature and extent of imported programming has become a significant aspect of a developing questioning about the meaning and even the separate existence of a New Zealand culture. Also at issue is the nature of nationhood. Patterns of international communication have fundamentally altered the understanding of nationality in a cultural sense. Nationality in New Zealand has been regarded as beginning around the 1890s as the country moved from regional life and loyalties to a national cohesion and distinctiveness, but even as it was achieved it dissolved into the experience and awareness of a wider international community that provided a new culture in both senses of the word. There is the humanities sense of cultural productions, which includes not just the traditional forms, from music to literature, but also the twentieth-century range from Olympic Games to Hollywood films. There is also the sociological sense of culture, conveyed by Raymond

Williams's words, 'Culture is ordinary' — people's day-to-day life, in which listening to radio and watching television play a significant part. In both these senses the distinctiveness of New Zealand's national culture has become difficult to sustain.

The nature of 'post-nationalism' is so extensive that no single factor is pre-eminent. Broadcasting shares a platform with other media, in the broadest sense of that word. Everything from telephones to music and video recordings, to the cinema and the press, to cars and motorways, fast foods, retail goods and their shop display, has brought a new normal life experience shared beyond the nation's boundaries. In this process broadcasting is both eminent and privileged. Only it involves the simultaneous sending of programmes to vast, increasingly international audiences. Broadcasting is also prominent because it encompasses both meanings of culture: cultural productions that encompass both high and popular culture, and radio listening and television watching as dominant leisure-time activities.

We stand on the threshold of considerable further growth in broadcasting. Radio station numbers continue to increase and in television tentative steps in the provision of cable television are starting to bear fruit. The one pay television company seems soon to face competition. There is no requirement that TVNZ and CanWest be content with their existing number of channels. Technological innovations, particularly digital transmission, suggest that a vast number of possible stations and channels may be added to the New Zealand offerings. Furthermore, because broadcasting stations no longer have to be sited within New Zealand for technical reasons, the choices for audiences may be added to by direct broadcasts from outside the country.

Perhaps more important than the increase in channels and stations is the change in the nature of broadcasting. In the 1990s attention has moved into areas unknown and unconsidered when radio and television began. The most significant is the Internet, which is broadcasting in the true sense in that its messages are not intended for a specific audience but can be seen and read by all and sundry. But in the extent of its reach, with the World Wide Web, and in the style of its transmission, with everyone able to send and receive messages, the Internet is beyond the traditional control of both broadcasters and national authorities.

As broadcasting continues to change and grow there is also a widespread acceptance that much of what is now considered to be broadcasting will soon be obsolete. Digital transmission could mean that rather than choosing to tune into programmes 'pushed' at them by broadcasters, individuals will be able to 'pull' a programme from a vast multimedia library of holdings. News, current affairs, live sports and an array of other programming uses are, however, full broadcasting in that they involve the live presentation of an event to a widely dispersed audience and this would seem

to remain a primary task for broadcasters for the foreseeable future. But much of what is currently transmitted are programmes made well before, often years before, their transmission. The timing of such programming may disappear from the control of broadcasters and instead be scheduled independently by individual members of the audience. Even the daily programmes such as news and sports are likely to have many forms as viewers become capable of selecting their own items.

In this changing environment much of the government's action to remove itself from involvement in broadcasting is understandable. The aims of broadcasting have moved away from the original government-determined goal of national integration and the government wants to divest itself of property that has lost a dominant, even a monopoly, status and to disengage from an activity with an uncertain future. That governmental withdrawal has been accompanied by an invitation to others to enter broadcasting. The opening of the airwaves has had different results in radio and television. In radio many fresh voices have been heard, from both new commercial and new community organisations, and the country is the richer for this variety and range. In television, too, the number of broadcasters has increased but the changes have led not to more variety but, rather, to more of the commercial domination already apparent in the 1980s.

A major result of the governmental change in attitude towards broadcasting has been the altered status of public broadcasting in New Zealand. When the 1960s opened, only publicly owned broadcasting was acceptable, and the concept included both commercial and non-commercial broadcasting. The years since the start of Radio Hauraki have seen the triumph of privately owned commercial broadcasting and a transformation within public broadcasting. The increasing commercialisation of corporation broadcasting was followed in the 1990s by the sale of the publicly owned commercial stations to the private sector and by the policy change in which public broadcasting became the concern of NZOA and, particularly in television, no longer the province of broadcasters.

The years covered by this history have seen the decline of political regard for public broadcasting. The 1997 destruction of Broadcasting House epitomised the fall of public broadcasting from government favour. Both the dominant political parties, National and Labour, with traditions and memories of day-to-day political control of broadcasting, including writing the daily news bulletins, accepted only grudgingly the new relationship between state and corporation. The corporation may have been slow to seize journalistic independence but the politicians were equally loath to cede their power. In the long run, the corporation did become truly independent, but at the cost of any political regard for the concept of public broadcasting journalism. Both parties regarded corporation journalism as antagonistic rather than neutral and there is no political acceptance that public broadcasting journalism is of a different nature or worth than

the alternative system of private ownership newspaper journalism.

Public broadcasting survives, the two major networks of Radio New Zealand remaining its finest examples within New Zealand. Concert FM holds to the philosophy of cultural enrichment by broadcasting the classical repertoire, and National Radio to a non-commercial journalism whereby its news and current affairs programmes continue as a widely respected alternative to the offerings of the New Zealand press and the television companies. That respect is not, however, shared politically; the prevailing attitude in the Beehive has been one of neglect. The concept of public broadcasting itself has fallen from favour, as recent New Zealand governments, both Labour and National, have queried the need to accept any but a commercial style of broadcasting. The 1999 Labour government has repudiated that view but has yet to detail the nature of its commitment to public broadcasting.

While public broadcasting continues in radio, its status in television is dubious at best. TVNZ remains under public ownership but not as a public broadcaster. The internationally low annual grant for public broadcasting is spent by NZOA on funding New Zealand programmes, but with results little changed from past years. In radio, the relative lack of New Zealand music continues to provoke the same calls for a local quota. In television the proportion of New Zealand programmes has not grown. The NZOA legislation does not offer a coherent programming philosophy or purpose other than to support New Zealand programming, much of which would have been purchased and programmed anyway by competing commercial broadcasters. The use of public money to fund New Zealand content is an acknowledgement of the almost 40-year failure of publicly owned broadcasting to give adequate expression to local programming. But the understanding that public broadcast programming should attempt to reach heights of excellence or enter new and unproven areas of interest and understanding is, if not lost, at least temporarily discarded.

Commercial broadcasting may have risen but it is unusually structured, welcoming foreign ownership with open arms, to the extent of endangering local ownership. In radio, other than with the community stations, only the Radio Pacific group, and in television only the government's continuation of its ownership of TVNZ counter the trend towards overwhelming foreign ownership. The New Zealand government's belief in the magnanimity of such owners is possibly credulous. Certainly no other country is following suit and leaving what are elsewhere regarded as politically and culturally strategic national resources so undefended. Broadcasting, which began with few frequencies available and husbanded as scarce resources, has come to be seen principally as a part of corporate commercial activity with no special place in the nation's life and no need for particular protection or definition. The task for the future surely is to reassess that understanding.

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- 86 The situation was long-lasting. In 1985 Edmunds said there was still the daily car journey from newsroom to studio in Auckland. TX1448, RNZSA.
- 87 AADL 564/301b, NA.
- 88 *Ibid.*
- 89 NZBC minutes, 19 February 1964, RNZSA.
- 90 NZBC minutes 20/21 November 1962, RNZSA. Cabinet paper cp(63)10, Holyoake ms1814, 208:2, ATL.
- 91 AADL 564/348a, NA. Holyoake ms1814, 208:2, ATL.
- 92 Holyoake ms1814, 208:2, ATL.
- 93 NZBC minutes, 1963, 3/22, RNZSA.
- 94 NZBC memo to district managers, station managers and head office section heads, 13 June 1963. Holyoake ms1814, 208:2, ATL.
- 95 Sceats to general director of National Party, 7 October 1963, AADL 564/348a, NA.
- 96 AADL 564/348a, NA.
- 97 Assistant administration officer to director-general, 23 December 1963, AADL 564/349a, NA.
- 98 G. R. Petherick to director-general, 5 November 1963, AADL 564/349a, NA.
- 99 *Listener*, 29 November 1963.
- 100 17 November 1963.
- 101 Press statement, 3 December 1963.
- 102 AADL 564/349a, NA.
- Inquiry into the Extension of Television Services, AADL W3363 Box 74, TV/S5(a), NA.
- 8 Llewellyn to Scott, 9 September, 16 December 1964, 9 April 1965, W3363 Box 5, NA
- 9 Scott interview, G.
- 10 Scott and Stringer interviews, G.
- 11 Normanbrook, 1965.
- 12 McFarlane interview, OHC.
- 13 NZBC minutes, 20-21 July 1965, RNZSA.
- 14 McFarlane interview, OHC.
- 15 Holcroft, 1969, p.191.
- 16 NZPD, Vol. 344, p.2566.
- 17 Gregory, p.45.
- 18 See the Auditor-General's reports for 1964 and 1965, B1, PtII, AJHR.
- 19 NZPD, Vol. 344, p.2613.
- 20 Holcroft, 1969, p.192.
- 21 Submission to 1969 NZBA Inquiry into the Extension of Television Services, AADL W3363 Box 74, TV/S29, NA.
- 22 Stringer TX1402, RNZSA.
- 23 Holcroft, 1969, p.193.
- 24 McFarlane interview, OHC.
- 25 Scott interview, G.
- 26 Gregory, p.47.
- 27 NZBC minutes, 16 March 1966, RNZSA.
- 28 NZBC minutes, 18 May 1965, RNZSA.
- 29 Stringer interview, G.
- 30 McMillan, 1995, Ch.8.
- 31 McMillan interview, D.
- 32 NZBC Annual Report, 1966, F3, AJHR.
- 33 NZBC Annual Report, 1963, F3, AJHR.
- 34 Stringer to W. Townhill, Private Secretary to Minister of Broadcasting, 1 July 1966, AADL W3363 Box 29, NA.
- 35 *Relay*, February 1964.
- 36 *Relay*, August 1963.
- 37 Downes interview, D.
- 38 Sceats to Z and X stations, 27 April and 17 December 1965, AADL 564/213b, NA.
- 39 Moore TX1434, RNZSA.

3 WHO CONTROLS BROADCASTING?

- 1 Blackburn, p.24.
- 2 Kinsella interview, G.
- 3 Scott interview, G.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Gregory, p.44.
- 6 Stringer interview, G.
- 7 NZBC minutes, 19 February 1964, RNZSA; submission to

- 40 Stringer TX1402, Johnstone TX1411, RNZSA; Stringer interview, G.
- 41 Bick, 1968, p.113.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p.106.
- 43 Cross interview, D.
- 44 Funnell to Maguire, 25 July 1969, AADL 564/257a,257b, NA.
- 45 Pryde to Funnell, 1 December 1967, ADL 564/258a, NA.
- 46 Sutch to Funnell, 8 December 1967, AADL 564/258a, NA.
- 47 Funnell to Pryde, 5 December 1967, AADL 564/258a, NA.
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- 50 NZBC minutes, 7/28, 1964, RNZSA.
- 51 Stringer TX1402 RNZSA. NZBC Annual Report, 1966, F3, AJHR.
- 52 T3752, RNZSA.
- 53 Maguire to Director-General, 4 February 1965, AANJ 998/5b, NA.
- 54 NZBC minutes, 1/31, 1965, RNZSA.
- 55 Scott interview, G; *Relay*, February 1965.
- 56 Bick, 1968, p.13.
- 57 Alexander TX1405, RNZSA.
- 58 Wear TX1446, RNZSA.
- 59 *Listener*, 2 March 1962.
- 60 Willis TX1442, RNZSA.
- 61 *Listener*, 10 December 1994.
- 62 Cross, 1988, pp.19-20.
- 63 *Dominion*, 8 July 1961.
- 64 Stringer interview, G.
- 65 Cross interview, D.
- 66 Stringer to Devine, 10 June 1965, AADL 564/299b, NA.
- 67 Scott interview, G.
- 68 H. E. Gilbert to Stringer, 23 March 1966, Stringer to Gilbert, 29 March and 21 October 1966, W3363, Box 5, NA.
- 69 AADL 564/299b, NA.
- 70 *Ibid.*
- 71 *Ibid.*
- 72 AADL 564/350a, NA.
- 73 *Ibid.*
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- 75 AADL 564/350a, NA.
- 76 Stringer to Private Secretary, Minister of Broadcasting, 5 July 1966, AADL 564/350a, NA.
- 77 NZBC minutes, 17 May and 28/29 June 1966, AADL 564/350a, NA.
- 78 29 July and 9 August 1966, AADL 564/350a, NA.
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- 80 Boyd-Bell, 1985, p.98.
- 81 Ian Prior, General Secretary, NZPGMF, to Director of Television, 22 July 1968. And see Stringer's doubts about the programme, 30 July 1969, AANJ 98/1c, NA.
- 82 24 March 1970, AANJ 998/1c, NA.
- 83 J. A. Baird, NZPGMF, to Supervisor of Programme Purchasing, 3 October 1974, AANJ 998/1c, NA.
- 84 Melford TX1439, RNZSA.
- 85 Skinner, 1980, pp.46-7.
- 86 Austin to Sargeson, 26 September 1961, ms4261, f128, ATL.
- 87 Melford TX1439, RNZSA.
- 88 Maddock TX1440, RNZSA. And see Boyd-Bell, pp.119-120.
- 89 Evison TX1430, RNZSA.
- 90 *Relay*, July 1963.
- 91 Bell TX1437, RNZSA.
- 92 *Press*, 13 April 1970.
- 93 *Press*, 25 May 1972.
- 94 *Evening Post*, 27 March 1973.
- 95 NZBC minutes, 7 December 1962, RNZSA.
- 96 NZBC minutes, 26 February and 17 July 1963, RNZSA.
- 97 Blackburn, 1974, p.15.
- 98 Blackburn, 1974, p.16.
- 99 NZBC minutes, 19 April, 28/9 June, 26 July and 23 August 1966, RNZSA.
- 100 Notes of meeting, 24 August 1966, AADL W3363 Box 29, NA.
- 101 As has been painstakingly documented by Blackburn, 1974.

- 102 Notes of meeting, 24 August 1966, AADL W3363 Box 29, NA.
 - 103 NZBC minutes, 18/19 October 1966, RNZSA.
 - 104 Gregory, p.48.
 - 105 Submission to NZBA Inquiry Into the Extension of Television Services, AADL W3363 Box 74 TV/S29, NA.
 - 106 NZBC minutes, 7 November 1966, RNZSA.
 - 107 Blackburn, 1974, p.111.
 - 108 Again see Blackburn for a full rendition of the seaborne life of *The Shoestring Pirates*.
 - 109 NZBC minutes, 15 November 1966, RNZSA.
 - 110 AADL W3363 Box 53, NA.
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 - 1 NZBC minutes, 1962, 5/30, RNZSA.
 - 2 Stringer TX1402, RNZSA.
 - 3 *Ibid*.
 - 4 Director-General to Commissioner of Works, 13 March 1964, AANJ 998/5a, NA.
 - 5 Director-General to Thorpe, Cutter, Pickmere & Partners, 28 March 1966, AANJ 998/5a, NA.
 - 6 NZBC minutes, 1965, 8/3, 1966, 8/4, RNZSA.
 - 7 A. W. Martin to Director-General, 13 February 1964, AANJ 998/5a, NA.
 - 8 N. R. Palmer to Director-General, 19 November 1969, AANJ 998/5a, NA.
 - 9 Director of Television to Director-General, 7 January 1965, AANJ 998/5a, NA.
 - 10 AANJ 998/3f, NA.
 - 11 Notes of meeting between Director of Engineering, Secretary to Cabinet and Secretary to Prime Minister, 12 August 1968, AANJ 998/5b, NA.
 - 12 *Relay*, July 1968.
 - 13 *Relay*, May 1968.
 - 14 *The Broadcasting Future for New Zealand*, 1973, p.38.
 - 15 AANJ 998/3c, NA.
 - 16 See Head Office to YC stations, 2 December 1966, AADL 564/532a, NA.
 - 17 22 May 1970, AADL 564/213b, NA.
 - 18 Stringer TX1402, RNZSA.
 - 19 Moore TX1434, RNZSA.
 - 20 Columbus TX1436, RNZSA.
 - 21 Quoted in *New Zealand Herald*, 1 June 1985.
 - 22 Johnstone TX1411, RNZSA.
 - 23 Thomson to Adams-Schneider, 16 September 1968, Adams-Schneider to Thomson, 20 September 1968, AADL 564/258a, NA.
 - 24 Holcroft interview, G.
 - 25 Muldoon, 1974, p.150.
 - 26 Holcroft interview, G.
 - 27 Coury to Director-General, 26 June 1968, AADL W3363 Box 5, NA.
 - 28 Edmunds TX1448, RNZSA.
 - 29 Sceats to Director-General, 10 July 1970; Powles to McKinnon, 14 July 1970, AADL W3363 Box 29, NA.
 - 30 See Alexander TX1405, RNZSA and Scott interview, G. Edwards wrote on the matter in 1971, Ch. 11 and also replied to Alexander in Edwards TX1428, RNZSA.
 - 31 *Waikato Times*, 5 May 1971.
 - 32 Press statement, 14 May 1971.
 - 33 *Christchurch Star*, 14 May 1971.
 - 34 *Listener*, 7 November 1969.
 - 35 AADL 564/303b, NA.
 - 36 D. N. Eckhoff to Editor, News Service, 18 April 1968, AADL 564/303d, NA.
 - 37 Sullivan, 1994, p.18.
 - 38 *Relay*, August 1965.
 - 39 Press release of 5 December 1957.
 - 40 AADL 564/454b, NA.
 - 41 NZBC minutes, 19-20 June 1962, RNZSA.

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- 43 NZBC Annual Reports, 1963-64, F3, AJHR.
- 44 NZBC Annual Reports, 1965-66, F3, AJHR.
- 45 NZBC Annual Report, 1963, F3, AJHR.
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- 49 Wakem, evidence before the Waitangi Tribunal, RNZSA.
- 50 7 May 1963, AADL 564/548d, NA.
- 51 AADL 564/573a, NA.
- 52 *Sunday Times*, 26 March and 9 April 1967.
- 53 NZBC Annual Report, 1969, F3, AJHR.
- 54 McFarlane interview, OHC.
- 55 Norman to Stringer, 16 December 1968, Palmer to Stringer, 20 December 1968, W3363, Box 5, NA.
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- 57 McFarlane interview, OHC.
- 58 *Ibid.*
- 59 6 August 1972, AAFL 796/1b, NA.
- 60 Normanbrook, 1965.
- 61 *NZPD*, Vol. 357, p.1939.
- 62 Scott interview, G.
- 63 Scott to Stringer, 5 December 1966, Secretary to Director-General, 8 March 1967, AADL W3363 Box 29, NA.
- 64 McFarlane interview, OHC.
- 65 Stringer to Scott, 13 January 1967, AADL W3363 Box 29, NA.
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- 67 *NZPD*, Vol. 357, p.2050.
- 68 *NZPD*, Vol. 357, p.2032.
- 69 *Evening Post*, 25 February 1969.
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- 73 NZBA Annual Report, 1970, AJHR.
- 74 AADL W3363, Box 53, NA.
- 75 *Listener*, 15 December 1973.
- 76 1968 Broadcasting Authority Act, 21(h).
- 77 P. C. Mortlock to Templeton, 5 March 1979, AADM W3805 Bro/Adm 1 Pt 1, NA.
- 78 AADM W3805 Bro/Adm 4 Pt 4 6/83, NA.
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- 80 *Otago Daily Times*, 25 July 1969.
- 81 AADL W3363 Box 74 in TV/S7, NA.
- 82 AADL W3363 Box 74, NA.
- 83 AAXO W2956 Box 12, NA.
- 84 Inquiry into the extension of television services, AADL W3363 Box 74, TV/S7(a), NA.
- 85 See the report in the *Southland Times*, 26 October 1970. Also Dryden, 1978, pp.198-9.
- 86 Submission to the NZBA inquiry into the extension of television services, AADL W3363 Box 74 TV/S5(a) and (b), NA.
- 87 McFarlane interview, OHC.
- 88 Holcroft, 1969, p.187.
- 89 *New Zealand Herald*, 2 March 1970.
- 90 Hartstonge TX1425, RNZSA.
- 91 Ian K. Mackay to Minister of Broadcasting, 17 June 1970, Box 2 of Acc 83-1, ATL.
- 92 Ian K. Mackay to A. O. O'Keefe, 29 October 1977, Box 2 of Acc 83-1, ATL.
- 93 *New Zealand Herald*, 25 June 1970.
- 94 AADL W3363 Box 75 Exc 48-9, NA.
- 95 Sceats TX1444, RNZSA.
- 96 W. Austin, Head of Drama, to Sargeson, 11 April 1972, ms4261, f128, ATL.
- 97 AADL W3363 Box 75 exhibit 32, submissions S27, S31, S32, S48, NA.
- 98 AADL W3363 Box 74

- (TV/S41(b), NA.
 99 p.133.
 100 On these relationships see 15 June 1972, notes of a meeting between NZBC and PSA representatives; 30 June 1972, D. P. Long general secretary of PSA to Director-General, AAFL 796/1b, NA; the statement of Noel Hilliard, *Listener* chief sub-editor, in AAFL 796/2a, NA; S. W. Bennett to Director-General, 12 June 1972, and the statement from Jacqueline Amoano, 29 August 1972, in AAFL 796/2b, NA. For an indication of MacLeod's relationship with Holcroft, see MacLeod to Director-General, 1 November 1967, AAFL 796/2b, NA.
 101 M. A. Rickard to Director-General, 13 October 1970, AAFL 796/3c, NA.
 102 Holcroft, 1969, pp.69-77.
 103 AAFL 796/2a, NA.
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 105 *Ibid.*
 106 Holcroft, 1969, p.66.
 107 McFarlane interview, OHC.
 108 1972, H58, p.55, AJHR.
 109 *Listener*, 10 January 1969.
 110 NZBC minutes, 1969, 4/6, NA.
 111 Board memo, 26 May 1969, AAFL 796/3c, NA.
 112 *Listener*, 17 September 1970. AAFL 796/2b, NA.
 113 *Dominion*, 19 March 1971.
 114 AAFL 796/3c, NA.
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 116 The first quotation is from D. P. McNab's submission to the Lee inquiry, the second from the Reverend K. M. Ihaka's.
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 119 S. J. Rodger, AAFL 796/1b, NA.
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 121 McKinnon to Walker, 18 May 1972, AAFL 796/2b, NA.
 122 AAFL 796/3c, NA.
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 127 *Press*, 31 July 1972.
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 130 NZPD, Vol. 379, p.1285.
 131 *Sunday Times*, 30 July 1972.
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 133 AADL 796/1b, NA.
 134 AJHR, 1972, H58, p.31.
 135 Muldoon, 1974, p.155.
 136 *Evening Post*, 29 July 1972.

5 COMPETITIVE CORPORATIONS

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- 2 Sceats TX1444, RNZSA.
- 3 Douglas interview, G.
- 4 Easton, 1997.
- 5 *Listener*, 8 December 1973.
- 6 J. B. Gordon in NZPD, Vol. 344, p.2599.
- 7 Hayward, p.21.
- 8 Dryden, 1978, Ch. 18.
- 9 *Dominion*, 5 April 1973.
- 10 *Otago Daily Times*, 2 August 1973.
- 11 See, for example, Alexander TX1405, RNZSA.
- 12 Sceats to Douglas, 1 February 1973, Douglas to Sceats, 5 February 1973, IL.
- 13 Notes of meeting, 18 December 1973 W3363 Box 5, NA.
- 14 Council minutes, 21 December 1973 AADL W3363 Box 5, NA.
- 15 Council minutes, 26 November 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 16 BCNZ minutes, 23 September 1986, AADL W3363 Box 24, NA.

- 17 *Evening Post*, 19 December 1973.
- 18 Lewis TX1422, RNZSA.
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 E. N. Ratcliff report, March 1974, AADL 941/1a, NA.
- 21 His first *Listener* editorial, however, was a guest editorial in the issue of 29 January 1973.
- 22 Parkinson to Supervisor of Public Affairs, 11 January 1967, AADL 564/257a, NA.
- 23 Cross interview, D.
- 24 *The Broadcasting Future for New Zealand*, 1973, p.126.
- 25 Cross, 1988, pp.14-15.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p.17.
- 27 Cross to Sargeson, 21 December 1973, ms4261 fl30, ATL.
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- 29 Annual Reports, 1973, 1977, F3, AJHR.
- 30 Council minutes, 8 December 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 31 Undated fact sheet, c. 21 June 1973, AANJ 998/5a, NA.
- 32 Alexander TX1405, RNZSA.
- 33 *The Broadcasting Future for New Zealand*, 1973, p.35.
- 34 Notes of meeting, 18 December 1973 W3363 Box 5, NA
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- 36 *Listener*, 27 July 1974.
- 37 *The New Zealand Herald* at one stage regarded Dryden as 'virtually assured' of one of the positions. 23 May 1973.
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- 39 Morris TX1412, RNZSA.
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- 41 Council minutes, 24 September 1975 and 28 April 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 42 Council minutes, 9 April and 25 June 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 43 Council minutes, 30 July 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 44 Council minutes, 24 September 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 45 *Listener*, 15 February 1975.
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- 48 *New Zealand Herald*, 5 June 1974.
- 49 AADL, W3363, Box 9, NA.
- 50 Council minutes, 10 April 1974, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 51 Council minutes, 1 February 1974, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 52 Council minutes, 30 July, 26 August and 3 December 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 53 Council minutes, 1 February 1974, 12 February, 18 March, 27 May, 25 June, 30 July and 24 September 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 54 Annual Report, 1977, F3, AJHR.
- 55 Council minutes, 12 February 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 56 Chief executives' meeting, 27 June 1977, AADL W3363 Box 9, NA.
- 57 Cryer, 1978, p.194.
- 58 Council minutes, 17 December 1974, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 59 Council minutes, 30 July, 26 August and 26 November 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 60 *Dominion*, 16 September 1973.
- 61 Council minutes, 23 June 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 62 Department of Internal Affairs submission to the Inquiry Into the Extension of Television Services, AADL W3363 Box 74, TV/S32, NA.
- 63 AADL W3363 Box 9, and council minutes, 30 April 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 64 Council minutes, 26 August and

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- 65 *Listener*, 13 December 1975 and 17 January 1976; council minutes, 25 February and 28 April 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 66 Council minutes 30 July and 26 November 1975, 25 February 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 67 Council minutes, 28 July 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 68 Notes of chief executives' meeting, 13 and 31 July 1975, AADL W3363 Box 9, NA.
- 69 AADL, W3363, Box 3, NA.
- 70 NZBC Annual Report, 1972, F3, AJHR.
- 71 *Relay*, April 1971.
- 72 *Relay*, September 1971.
- 73 *Relay*, May/June 1972.
- 74 Day, 1990, Ch. 9.
- 75 Chester & McMillan, 1990, pp.472, 476.
- 76 Chester & McMillan, 1978, p.322.
- 77 Council minutes, 22 September 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 78 Coury, RNZSA.
- 79 *Listener*, 23 October 1976.
- 80 Council minutes, 18 March, 26 August and 29 October 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 81 Council minutes, 26 May and 30 July 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 82 *NZPD*, Vol. 396, pp.247-8, Vol. 397, pp.1213-15. 1250-6.
- 83 Templeton interview, D.
- 84 Muldoon, 1974, pp.148-152.
- 85 Edwards, 1971, p.263.
- 86 *Listener*, 8 November 1971.
- 87 The saga is recounted, not necessarily dispassionately, in Edwards, 1971, Ch. 12. Muldoon's comments are in 1974, pp.155-6.
- 88 AAFL 796/3c, NA.
- 89 Moore TX1434, RNZSA.
- 90 Council minutes, 27 August and 26 September 1974, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 91 Full details of the 1975 and 1978 allocations are given in the notes for the chief executives' meeting, 2 March 1978, AADL W3363 Box 10, NA.
- 92 Board of management minutes, 1 May 1975, AADL W3363 Box 9, NA.
- 93 Council minutes, 30 July 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 94 *Listener*, 30 April 1977.
- 95 Council minutes, 26 August 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 96 *Listener*, 18 October 1975.
- 97 Chief executives' committee, 2 March 1978, AADL W3363 Box 10, NA.
- 98 Council minutes, 26 November 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 99 Notes of chief executives' meeting, 1 March 1976, AADL W3363 Box 9, NA.
- 100 D. M. Exel, 14 October 1977, AADL W3363 Box 10, NA.
- 101 P. B. Leay, 22 November 1977, AADL W3363 Box 10, NA.
- 6 REUNIFICATION AND THE BCNZ
- 1 Council minutes, 3 December 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 2 Templeton and Cross interviews, D.
- 3 *Listener*, 3 July 1976.
- 4 AAXO W3694 F13 Box 261, NA.
- 5 *Ibid*.
- 6 Council minutes, 25 February 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 7 Council minutes, 22 September, 27 October and 24 November 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 8 Council minutes, 4 May and 28 July 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 9 Notes of chief executives'

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- 10 Council minutes, 27 October and 24 November 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
 - 11 Council minutes, 4 May and 22 September 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
 - 12 Council minutes, 28 April 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
 - 13 Council minutes, 25 August 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
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 - 15 Council minutes, 28 July and 25 August 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
 - 16 Council minutes, 28 April 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
 - 17 Council minutes, 26 May, 23 June, 28 July and 25 August 1976, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
 - 18 Hartstonge TX1425, RNZSA.
 - 19 BCNZ Annual Report, 1978, F3, AJHR.
 - 20 *Listener*, 18 September 1982.
 - 21 Downes interview, D.
 - 22 Templeton interview, D.
 - 23 Cross, 1988, p.25.
 - 24 *Christchurch Star*, 18 July 1978.
 - 25 *Listener*, 29 March 1986.
 - 26 BCNZ minutes, 27 March and 17 April 1984, AADL W3363 Box 24, NA.
 - 27 Whitehead, 1988, p.15.
 - 28 Cross interview, D.
 - 29 Board of management meeting, 2 June 1977, AADL W3363 Box 9, NA.
 - 30 K. M. Hay, 21 July 1978, AADL W3363 Box 10, NA.
 - 31 19 April 1978, AADL W3363 Box 10, NA.
 - 32 Board of management meeting, 23 February 1977, AADL W3363 Box 9, NA.
 - 33 Cross, 1988, p.83.
 - 34 Full particulars of the decision are given in the memorandum on broadcasts of political statements in Appendix D of the BCNZ Annual Report, 1980, F3, AJHR.
 - 35 Muldoon, 1977, p.141; 1981, p.51.
 - 36 *Listener*, 15 October 1988.
 - 37 *Auckland Star*, 6 September 1977.
 - 38 *Christchurch Star*, 7 September 1977.
 - 39 *Dominion*, 9 September 1977 and see the debate in *NZPD*, Vol. 413, pp.3074-8.
 - 40 Chief executives' meeting, 22 September 1977, AADL W3363 Box 9, NA.
 - 41 T. F. A. Shankland to Controller of Finance, Head Office, 13 July 1973, AANJ 998/2a, NA.
 - 42 *NZPD*, Vol. 421, p.4015.
 - 43 The sub-committee's report is Part III of the Public Expenditure Committee Annual Report 1977. It and the other documentation is in AADL W3363 Box 3, NA.
 - 44 *Dominion*, 24 April 1979.
 - 45 *Auckland Star*, 17 April 1979.
 - 46 *Waikato Times*, 7 May 1979.
 - 47 Cross, 1988, pp.93-94.
 - 48 AADL W3363 Box 85, NA; *Listener*, 2 August 1980.
 - 49 Council minutes, 9 and 30 April 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
 - 50 Council minutes, 6 March and 18 May 1974, AADL W3363 Boxes 3 and 22, NA.
 - 51 Chief executives' meeting, 27 July 1978, AADL W3363 Box 10, NA.
 - 52 *Listener*, 3 March 1979.
 - 53 *Listener*, 6 March 1976.
 - 54 Notes of chief executives' meeting, 25 July 1976, AADL W3363 Box 9, NA.
 - 55 Chief executives' committee, 21 July 1977, AADL W3363 Box 9, NA.
 - 56 Chief executives' committee, 27 October 1977, AADL W3363 Box 9, NA.

- 57 Chief executives' meeting, 13 February 1978, AADL W3363 Box 9, NA.
- 58 Council minutes, 3 December 1975, AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 59 Cross interview, D.
- 60 Morris TX1412, RNZSA.
- 61 Chief executives' meeting, 21 October 1977, AADL W3363 Box 10, NA.
- 62 AADL W3363 Box 22, NA.
- 63 *Listener*, 10 September 1988.
- 64 *Listener*, 15 October 1988.
- 65 *Christchurch Star*, 14 March 1979.
- 66 *Auckland Star*, 29 August 1979.
- 67 W. L. Renwick interview, D.
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